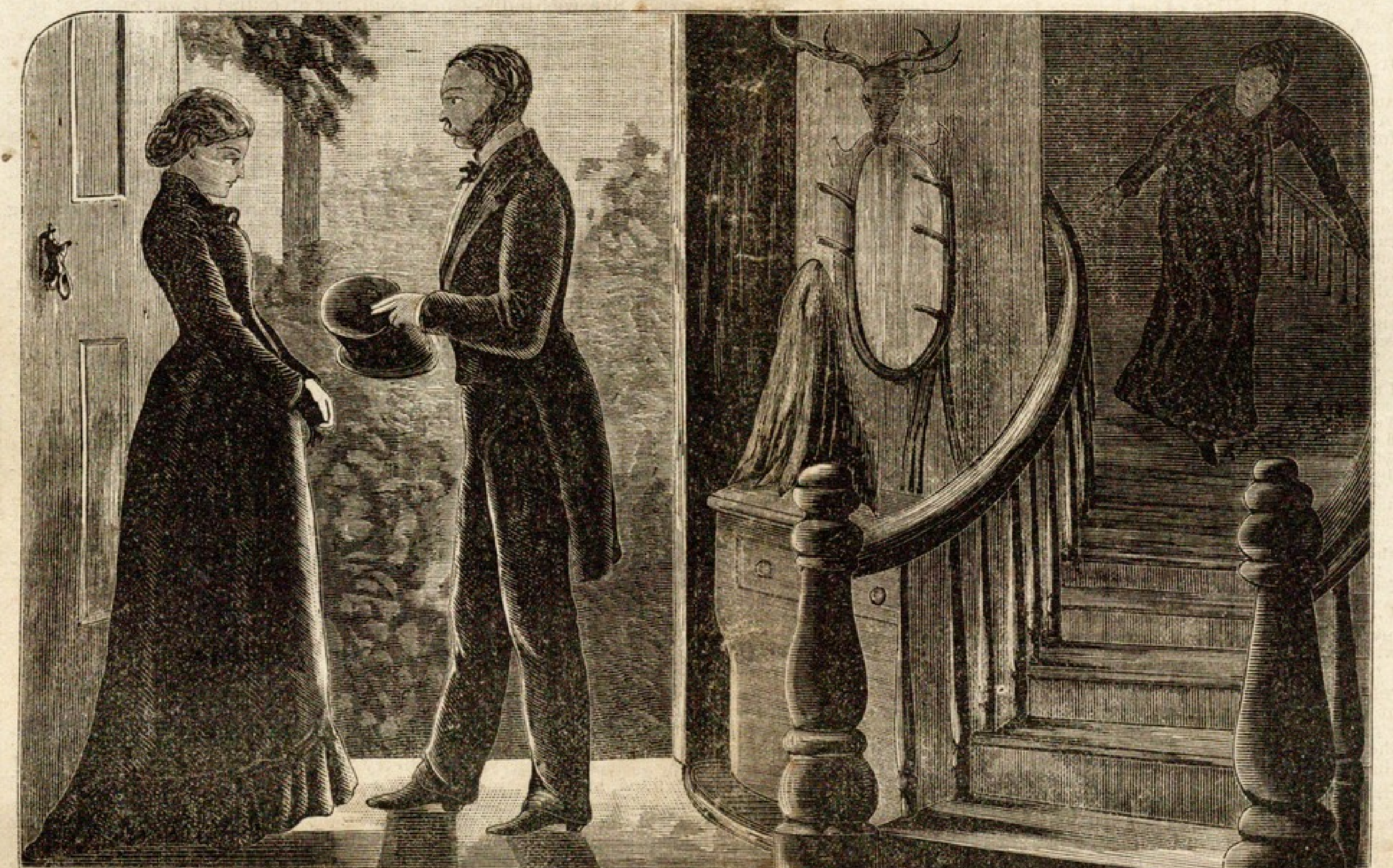
THE NEW YORK LEDGER

DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XXXIII. ROBERT BONNER, {COR. OF WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1877. TERMS. {$3 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 44.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1877, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



ON THE WATCH.

WIN AND WEAR.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

Win an honor ere you wear it,
  Nothing but your dues receive;
Suns will bleach it, tempests tear it,
  If of tinsel make-believe.
Gleam the walks that men inherit,
  In and out their lights and glooms,
With the blaze of real merit
  And the flash of borrowed plumes.

Suddenly, with angry bluster,
  Troublous rains the ways invade;
Mark the moves of all that muster
  In the motley cavalcade.
Which will brave the tempest's fury,
  Which will wash, and which will wear?
Which to hide themselves will hurry,
  Which still on the highway fare?

Lo, to any transient shelter
  That may save their tufts forlorn,
Speed the puppets, helter skelter,
  Soon to be the public scorn;
While in stately calm the Noble
  Who have learned to win and wear
Keep their pace till all the trouble
  Passes, and the sky is fair.

Then, what draggled plumes come skulking
  Out into the sun again,
With their shamed possessors sulking
  At the work of wind and rain;
While, in sunnier joy reflected
  From the bath that tried their hues,
Shine the crests by work effected
  As reward of honest dues.

Thought and toil that weakened never—
  Burning of the midnight lamp—
Patience, trust and high endeavor
  Gave them their enduring stamp.
Win and wear! The world's worst burden
  Is Pretense, of specious glance;
True desert will win the guerdon
  That outlasts the storms of chance.

THE BRIDE'S ORDEAL.

By MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
AUTHOR OF "THE DESERTED WIFE," "SELF-MADE," "THE HIDDEN HAND," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

AN OMINOUS BETROTHAL.

What doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words. SHAKESPEARE.

Erma Wildering looked up with eyes full of amazement and utter perplexity.

She did not understand the strong agitation with which he spoke, but met his gaze with such an expression of frank bewilderment that Rodolph Wolfsohn, after muttering to himself, "I am a brute," asked, in a milder tone:

"Have you a favored lover, Erma?"

"No," she answered, promptly.

"Have you ever had one?"

"No, never."

"Forgive my catechism if it offends you, Erma; but you have drawn me on to love you, with a love that must be to me salvation or perdition! And you have given me your heart! There is no presumption in saying this, Erma, for I know it! What further I must know, is this: Is their any other—Heaven, that I should have to ask it!—is there any other suitor of yours who has any claim upon your heart?"

"No, none!"

"Has there ever been?"

"No, never! Have I not already answered these two questions in effect?" she inquired, meeting his searching gaze innocently.

"Yes, you have! You have! But—where there was so much at stake—where my fate hung— Forgive me, love! And tell me why, then, since your life has been blameless and your heart and hand free, why should the joys of domestic life be denied to you, as you say they must be?" he demanded vehemently.

"That is and must remain a secret," solemnly replied the girl.

"Erma, WHAT is it that keeps us apart?"

"I said it must remain a secret!—that is the reason why—" here her voice broke down for a moment, for, try as she might to control herself, her own strong emotion over-mastered her.

"Go on!" he exclaimed, almost fiercely, although he did not wish to be harsh. "Go on! What were you about to say?"

"Oh, hear me patiently, then," she resumed in a broken voice. "I love you! I *do* love you, Rodolph! If that knowledge will make you any happier, why, then take it! And to part with you will give me as much misery as it can give you. I feel that this parting will almost break my heart! If hearts were not so tough to bear," she added with a dreary smile, "I should say it would quite break mine. If *that* will reconcile you to our separation, Rodolph, believe it! It is true!"

"But it does not reconcile me. Nothing can reconcile me to the loss of you. And now, since you acknowledge the truth, acknowledge that you love me—NOTHING shall part us!" he impetuously exclaimed.

"But my secret—my secret, Rodolph!"

"Since it does not involve another favorite lover of yours, a rival of mine, I do not care WHAT it is. It shall not divide us, Erma."

"But oh! if you knew—if you knew what it is, Rodolph, I tell you that you might cast me from you!" she cried, wringing and twisting her fingers in the anguish of her soul.

"'Cast' you from me, my queen! my love!" he exclaimed, dropping down again on one knee beside her chair, taking her hand and gazing up into her face, with all his soul burning through those brown eyes. "Erma, I do not ask you for your secret! Keep it. I ask you for yourself! Give yourself to me!"

"*Oh! oh!* What must I do? What ought I to do?" she wailed, drawing her fingers from his clasp and wringing her hands.

"Give yourself to me, Erma! Give yourself to me!" he implored.

"*Do* you know what you ask? Would *you*—would *any* man, and *you* least of all men—endure a wife who had a sinful, shameful secret that she kept, and must forever keep, from her husband's knowledge?" she moaned, her face white with agony.

"YES!" he cried, impetuously starting to his feet in his earnestness. "Yes, if it was not *her* fault! YES!—A thousand times YES! It is *you* whom I want, my own dear love, and not your secret, Erma! Is this the only reason why you would reject me?"

"Yes, the only reason. Oh, Rodolph," she breathed, in a tone that brought him to her side again—"I was so happy in your society that I was almost lured into forgetfulness of all that I should have remembered. I did not know whither I was drifting, and drawing you or being drawn by you, until the thoughtless jesting of little Fleurie Fleetwood opened my eyes and I saw that we were floating to the brink of a dreadful fall. Then, Rodolph, I tried to turn back. I tried to save us both. I denied myself to your visits and avoided *tête-à-têtes* when we met in other company. And—oh, I suffered as much as you!"

"And was it only on account of this concealment?"

"*Oh, yes!* Only on account of this!"

"Then this SHALL NOT divide us! Erma! My Erma! Tell me now that you will be mine!" he exclaimed, seizing both her hands and pressing them warmly to his lips.

"If you will have me—burdened with my secret," she whispered in a trembling tone.

He started up and caught her in his arms and pressed her to his heart.

"Now, there must be no going back on your part! No mistake on the part of the family here! Come, my love!"

And he drew her arm within his own and led her from the drawing-room and into the parlor, where the family circle still sat around the fire.

They all looked up with surprise on seeing him enter with a frankly happy face, and bearing Erma Wildering on his arm.

He went straight up to Mr. Gladden, and standing before him, said, with the oddest mixture of gayety and grimness:

"I have come to beg your pardon for having so abused your hospitality as to have—"

"Persuaded our charming young friend to leave us," said Clement Gladden, striking in and finishing the sentence. "Well, I expected nothing less of you, Wolfsohn—Son of a Wolf. And I forgive you, and I wish you well," he added gayly, as he shook the brown hand of the young man and raised the fair fingers of the young girl to his lips.

"It is not my purpose to leave, however, Mr. Gladden, until my term is up, nor even then unless you shall have found a substitute for me," said Erma, in a low voice.

"We will see about that, my dear girl. We must not let our selfish interests and feelings stand in the way of your happiness and that of our friend here," answered the old man, blandly.

Then turning to Mrs. Fleetwood and Miss Mesh, he exclaimed:

"Well, my dears, our young couple here are ready to receive your congratulations."

Rooster and Flurry, who had not been spoken to at all, were the first, however, to respond. Both jumped up, dropping their work, and hurried to Miss Wildering, Flurry seizing her right arm and Rooster her left.

"I told you so!" said Flurry. "*I* knew how it was going all along, and I told you so; but you ordered me to hush and never to speak of *such* a thing again! And now you see I was right! Yes, and I was right in another thing, too! And you'll find it so! Mind if you don't."

"And what is that other thing in which you are a prophetess, Miss Flurry?" inquired Wolfsohn, smiling, for he was so happy.

"Oh, *she* knows! I warned her of it! It is:

"'Change the name and not the letter,
Wed for worse and not for better!'"

"But I don't understand! I am all in the dark!" laughed Rodolph, as he placed a chair for his betrothed and caused her to sit down.

"Oh, *she* understands well enough. W for Wildering and W for Wolfsohn. Yes, and my goodness! I did not think of that before! W for wed and W for worse! Oh, this is going to be a wicious wedding, Mr. Wolfsohn and Miss Wildering. You had both better back out of it!"

"Fleurie, behave yourself!" exclaimed Mrs. Fleetwood, severely, as she put out her hand, seized the young lady by the skirt of her dress and drew her away from Erma's side.

"Yes. And let *me* speak. Your 'tongue is hinged in the middle and runs at both ends,' don't it, Flurry? Now I want to say something to Miss Erma. Don't you be too fast, Miss Erma; because I meant to marry you myself. *I did so.* I told Quil about it. And I told Flurry, too. Flurry told me that you was too old for me, that I was nine and you was eighteen, which was twice as old as me, so when I would be twenty-five years old you would be fifty, and when I would be fifty you would be a hundred years old, if you lived! But I don't care. Flurry, *she* don't want you to marry anybody, and she is trying to scare *you* out of marrying Mr. *Wolfsohn*, and trying to scare *me* out of marrying *you*. *I* ain't afeard. Wasn't Napoleon Bonaparte's wife, the Empress Josephine, *ever* so much older than he was, and—"

"Weren't they divorced?" put in Flurry from her corner of the fireplace.

"Don't care. So are other people. Wasn't General Washington's wife ever so much older than he was? And weren't *they* happy? Oh! So, Erma, if you'll just wait till I grow up as tall as you are I will marry you MYSELF. And oh, I tell you what *you* can do, Mr. Wolfsohn. If you will only leave Erma alone, and let her wait for me, *you* can wait for Flurry. *Now!*"

"Thank you; but I am thrice Miss Flurry's age now, and, according to her arithmetic, by the time she is twenty-five I shall be seventy-five, and she might not like that," laughed Rodolph.

"And so you won't do it?"

"The offer is tempting, but I am afraid I cannot."

"Well, never mind, you are so much older a man than I am that maybe you will die before I grow up, and then I can marry Erma all the same."

"Thank you—for Erma," said Mr. Wolfsohn.

Mrs. Fleetwood rang the bell.

Aquilo answered it.

"Take this troublesome boy off to bed," said the lady.

Rooster protested, but his mother insisted, and the servant obeyed.

Rodolph Wolfsohn, who had remained standing behind Erma's chair, now took his leave, asking permission to return in the morning.

Mr. Gladden attended him from the room, and when they reached the hall, said:

"Come into the drawing-room for a moment, my boy. I wish to have a word with you."

Rodolph followed the old man into the vacant *salon* that had been the scene of his interview with Erma.

When they were comfortably seated before one of the fine wood-fires, Mr. Gladden held out his hand to the young man and said:

"I must again congratulate you, my boy. If I am any judge of character, you have won a prize in this young lady. I wish you both much happiness with all my heart."

The young man took and pressed the offered hand, and bowed over it in eloquent silence.

"But it was not only to say this that I brought you here, but—to—how shall I begin with a proud fellow like yourself?" inquired Clement Gladden in perplexity, as he looked anxiously into the face of his young neighbor.

"Surely, Mr. Gladden, you may say anything you please to my father's son, and he will only take it in kindness and gratitude," said Rodolph Wolfsohn, earnestly, and without a suspicion of what the old man really meant to say.

"Well, I hope so! I hope so! That you will receive my words in kindness, I mean. There is no need of gratitude, my boy."

Rodolph bowed.

"Well, then, this is what I have got to say. Your father and I were neighbors and friends, Wolfsohn. He has done me many a kind turn, which—which—"

"Which you have more than repaid by innumerable kindnesses to him and to his," added the young man.

"No, no! No, no! I meant nothing of the sort, my boy. Your father and I exchanged many neighborly services; that we did. And that gives me some right, at this crisis of your life, to—to—to—"

"To counsel his son, if you see fit to do so," added Rodolph, somewhat amused at the old man's strange and blushing embarrassment.

"Yes, yes, precisely! *pre*-cisely—to counsel and *assist* his son. Therefore, Rodolph, as I happen to be acquainted with the—the—I mean, somewhat acquainted with the condition of your affairs, I hope you will be so good as to allow me to—well, to—place a few idle thousands of dollars at your disposal, as a loan—oh, yes—as a loan, my boy, to be paid at your convenience. You will want to fix up the old house, you know; and— Ah! forgive me for this interference in your private affairs, my boy; and—your father loved me—and—what I have offered is most heartily at your service," concluded Clement Gladden, looking down and reddening as if he had just solicited a loan of money instead of offering one.

The humility and embarrassment of the old man's attitude took all the sting of offence from Wolfsohn's morbid pride and sensitiveness.

"My *dear* Mr. Gladden! My *honored* friend! You do not know how deeply I appreciate your generosity, and how sincerely I thank you for your kindness. But you will understand my motives, and pardon me, I know, when I tell you that the first humble ambition of my life is to get out of debt, and to keep out of debt—not to sink deeper into it. You will pardon me, therefore, that while deeply sensible of your liberality, and grateful for your offered loan, I am compelled to decline it," said the young man, earnestly.

"Very laudable! Very laudable in you to wish to avoid debt, my dear boy. Well, I said a loan; but, in fact, if I had spoken my heart's real wish, I should have begged you to let me do a father's part by you, and on this occasion of your approaching marriage, give you the help I should have given my son under the same circumstances. I have no children of my own *here*, you know. *My* children are beyond all poor earthly needs. If you would permit me—"

"My *dear* Mr. Gladden!" exclaimed Rodolph, taking and clasping the kind hand that would have helped him—"my *noble* friend! If I could bring myself to accept a gift from any man, it would be from you, and only from you! Pardon me if I must still seem ungracious, while most thankfully declining it."

"You are very high-spirited, my boy! Well, well, remember this—that if ever you *should* need a friend, here am I to serve you to the utmost extent of my power."

Again Rodolph Wolfsohn pressed and bowed over the hand that he still retained, and then he took leave of Clement Gladden and left Brighthome.

Mr. Gladden returned to the drawing-room, pondering on the problem how he could best help his poor but proud young neighbor.

"Darkwood is a hopeless wilderness, and Darkwood Lodge a ruin! How can he think of asking a young lady to share such a home? And how is he ever to improve it without money? I give it up! I give it up! Yet, perhaps, I might find some means of helping him, through *her*. I'll think of it! I'll think of it! Now, there is Blantyre, with landscape gardeners, builders, upholsterers and decorators, turning Blantyre House and park into a perfect paradise for his matronly bride. And here is this poor young Wolfsohn without the means of mending his dilapidated old lodge for the youngest and prettiest bride that has ever been seen in this neighborhood! They will have a house, such as it is, to cover them, and food, such as it is, to keep them alive, and that will be about all! And yet I encouraged him to marry, and I know I was right. But having done so, I must devise some means of making that poor girl comfortable—I must indeed!"

Before the old man had finished his mental soliloquy, he had opened the door and re-entered the parlor.

He noticed that Erma Wildering and her pupil, Fleurie, had both withdrawn from the room.

He was sorry for that circumstance, as it would give Mrs. Fleetwood and Miss Mesh the opportunity, which he knew they would seize, of opening their batteries upon him, in attacking the intended marriage.

"Uncle, what *could* you have been thinking about to have favored such an improvident match?" began Mrs. Fleetwood.

"Thinking about making young people happy, my dear, by encouraging them to obey the very first law given to man by his Creator," replied Mr. Gladden, quietly sinking into his old arm-chair.

"Well, for my own part, I was so shocked that I *could not* offer them any congratulations! I was glad when the children made a diversion that covered our silence—though they *did* carry it too far, in the end, so that I had to send off Eustace to bed! The man is a lunatic and the girl is an idiot to think of such a marriage!"

"That is very strong language, my dear Susan."

"Not a bit *too* strong! What will they have to live on? *You* will have to support them! Mind that!"

"My dear, I should be perfectly willing to help them if Wolfsohn would allow me, which I doubt."

"I don't doubt, then!" exclaimed Mrs. Fleetwood.

"Neither do I!" chimed in Miss Mesh.

"My dears, is it not bed-time?" inquired the old gentleman, rising and ringing the bell.

Aquilo responded to the summons by entering with a tray of bedroom candles.

Mr. Gladden handed one to each of the ladies, took the third himself, bade them good-night, and left the room—to escape the altercation.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORE OMINOUS MARRIAGE.

Life treads on life, and heart on heart;
We press too close in church and mart
To keep a dream or grave apart.
E. B. BROWNING.

From this time, Rodolph Wolfsohn, as well as Russell Blantyre, became a daily visitor and welcome guest at Brighthome.

Every afternoon at five o'clock, Erma Wildering dismissed her pupils for the day, and went up into her own room to dress for the evening, and to watch from her front window for the approach of her lover.

On these short winter days, at this hour, it would be twilight; but as the woods were bare, and the ground was covered with snow, she could, while sitting at the window of her darkened room, which was only dimly lighted by the wood-fire in the fireplace, easily discern the first appearance of his figure as he came walking up the narrow path leading up the wintry, wooded hill to Brighthome.

Then she would go down to welcome him as he entered the drawing-room, lifting the old, rusty, black felt hat from his handsome dark face, that looked all the more distinguished from the contrast of his threadbare coat.

Erma felt that she loved him all the more for his voluntary, courageous poverty.

Very different was the aspect of Captain Blantyre, who came in faultless evening dress, black broadcloth, swallow-tailed coat, lavender-colored pantaloons of the latest cut, vest and gloves to match, polished patent-leather boots, and so forth.

The captain also always came riding in a sulky drawn by a blooded horse, while the poorer gentleman, though coming from a greater distance, came on foot.

Erma saw all these contrasts, and the only effect they had upon her heart was to make her love her poorer lover with all the deeper tenderness and higher honor.

Meanwhile Ada Mesh watched and listened, seized every opportunity, and neglected no means of discovering Erma Wildering's secret; but hitherto without success. The few letters that she had contrived to get a sight of had been very cautiously worded, and had only increased her curiosity without gratifying it.

"*Now*, however," she thought within herself, when she heard of Erma Wildering's betrothal, "there must be something more definite in the correspondence. She must tell the Bishop of her approaching marriage, and he will have something to say about it. I must see both letters, if possible."

It was the rule of the family to have their letters written and sealed by the afternoon or evening of each day, so that they might be ready for Aquilo to take to the post-office at Ice Cliff early in the morning when he went to bring the mail home.

Miss Mesh loitered about the hall and staircase for several days, at the most likely hours for observing the family mail service, without learning anything new.

At length, however, one afternoon, just as the little school was let out, Miss Mesh, sauntering leisurely in the front hall, saw Fleurie Fleetwood fly down the front stairs with a letter in her hand.

"What is that, Flurry?" inquired the lady, stopping the child.

"Oh! it is a letter Miss Erma gave me to give Uncle Clement to put in the mail-bag," she answered, holding the missive up to view.

Miss Mesh saw that it was directed to the Right Reverend Doctor Abel Whiting, Bishop, &c.

"Well, give it to me. I am just going into Mr. Gladden's study to take my own letters. I can take that as well," said Miss Mesh, reaching forth her hand.

Fleurie held the letter out to the woman, and then, quick as lightning, snatched it back and clasped it fast.

How like a flash are the intuitions of childhood! Fleurie acted on an impulse that she could neither understand nor resist.

"Give me the letter, my dear," said Miss Mesh, in as careless a tone as she could assume.

"No, thank you, Miss Ada. I was sent to take it to Uncle Clement to put in the mail-bag, and I had better do it myself," answered the child, holding the letter close to her bosom.

"But why, when I am going to him myself? Why should both of us go?" asked Miss Mesh.

"Why indeed? Let *me* take *your* letter also, Miss Ada. It is better that *I* should wait on *you* and do *your* errand than that you should wait on me and do mine," said the child, with some reason.

"There, then, thank you, Flurry. Take my letter too," answered Miss Mesh, who was afraid to persevere lest she should excite suspicion that might defeat all her future projects.

Fleurie went off, singing, to her uncle's study, and Miss Mesh remained walking up and down the hall, sorely disappointed, and wondering whether there might yet be an opportunity for her to get a sight of that letter before the mail-bag left the house. It would start the next morning by daybreak, she knew; but where it would remain during the night, or whether she could get access to it, she could not tell.

Her cogitations were interrupted by the sound of wheels on the gravel walk before the house, followed by a resounding knock on the outside of the door and met by the hurrying steps of the servant Aquilo, who opened it to admit Captain Blantyre.

The gay captain bowed with lowly reverence to Miss Mesh as he passed on to the drawing-room.

The next moment Rodolph Wolfsohn entered so noiselessly that Miss Mesh only became conscious of his presence when she turned and found the dark, picturesque figure of the young man standing before her, rusty black felt hat in hand.

"Ah! good afternoon, Mr. Wolfsohn. Miss Wildering has not come down yet. Mrs. Fleetwood and Captain Blantyre are in the drawing-room—*tête-à-tête*, you know. Will you walk into the little parlor? There is a good fire there," said Miss Mesh, leading the way to a front room opposite that one which the first visitor had entered.

Rodolph Wolfsohn bowed and followed the lady.

"Sit near the fire. It is very cold. I have never known so cold a winter when the snow lay frozen over so deeply on the ground before," continued Miss Mesh, as she hospitably pointed to an arm-chair in the chimney-corner.

"Thanks," said the young man, bowing again, as he seated himself.

Miss Mesh took the next chair, remarking casually:

"Erma is not ready to make her appearance yet. She has been writing letters home—to her parents, I suppose. Are you acquainted with her parents, Mr. Wolfsohn? But of course you are."

"No, really I am not," answered the young man, uneasily, feeling for the first time how very strange it was that Erma Wildering had never mentioned her father or mother, nor ever made the slightest allusion to any member of her family.

"*What?* Not know anything about the parents of your betrothed? Is not that very unusual? To be sure *we* know nothing whatever of Miss Wildering's family. She has never breathed a word about one of them to us; but I surely thought she must have been more communicative to *you*, her affianced husband," said Miss Mesh, meaningly.

"I—presumed her to be an orphan. She is in deep mourning, as I supposed, for her parents. If my supposition is true, why, of course, the subject of her parents would be a very painful one to her. She would naturally avoid it," replied Rodolph Wolfsohn, as an excuse for his betrothed, and as a sedative to his own painfully excited thoughts.

"I do not see that! Dutiful and affectionate children love to speak of their parents, even though they may not be able to do so without tears," said Miss Mesh.

"Individuals are sometimes exceptions to general rules. I do not think Miss Wildering is one of those who are apt to talk of their private sorrows," said Mr. Wolfsohn, with some grave rebuke in his manner.

"I KNOW she is not, with *us*, at least! With you I thought she would have had no concealments."

"'Concealments?'" echoed Rodolph Wolfsohn, as his face flushed and his dark eyes flashed.

But Miss Mesh having sent her most effective shaft, prudently retired behind it by slipping out of the room.

Rodolph Wolfsohn arose in much agitation and began to walk up and down the floor.

Who was this Erma Wildering—this dark enchantress who had ensnared his soul and body—to whom he was bound in life and death? Who was this mysterious girl of whom he knew nothing more than that she was a beautiful young woman who came to the neighborhood recommended by Bishop Whiting?

But she *was* endorsed by the bishop, and that seemed to be enough for the worthy family who had received her, and ought, perhaps, to be satisfactory to him—a man of a noble race and of unblemished honor.

Yet, what was the secret she was keeping even from him, her betrothed husband?

But he had promised that this secret should make no division between them, and he was resolved that he would keep his promise.

Besides, he loved her! He loved her with a passion that was destiny to both, whether to their salvation or—perdition.

He continued to walk up and down the room with irregular steps and troubled thoughts until the door noiselessly opened and Erma Wildering entered the room.

He went to meet her smilingly—all dark thoughts disappearing in her presence, as the shades of night before the dawn of day.

"You are late in coming down, dear," he said, half reproachfully, as he led her to the sofa and seated himself by her side.

"I have been writing to my old friend and benefactor, Bishop Whiting, to tell him of our betrothal," answered Erma, with a smile; adding: "And afterward I had to change my dress."

"He is your guardian, I presume—this venerable prelate?" ventured Wolfsohn.

"Well—no, not quite that. Though—yes, in some sort he may be called so," replied Erma, hesitatingly and confusedly.

"Oh! I did not know. I thought, perhaps, you were an orphan—" said Mr. Wolfsohn, stopping then, and looking straight in the face of the girl.

She lowered her eyes, and did not answer his implied question.

Rodolph Wolfsohn sighed, and shuddered.

An awkward silence fell between them that lasted for the few minutes before the ringing of the tea-bell.

Then Erma Wildering arose. Her pale face was even paler than usual, and her eyes were full of anguish as she laid her hand on the top of his chair, and murmured in an agitated voice:

"Rodolph, I have a word to say to you, and I must say it now."

"Say on, then, Erma," he answered, mournfully, as he also arose and stood before her.

"Rodolph, I love you. Heaven only knows how truly. But—if ever you have a painful suspicion or damaging thought of me, to make you regret our betrothal, Rodolph, you must consider yourself free to break it."

He gazed on her with widely dilated, burning orbs.

"Break with you! Give you up! Never! No, Erma! Whatever may have gone before—whatever may come after, I am yours! You are mine!" he earnestly exclaimed, opening his arms and folding her to his bosom.

"*Oh, this is love!*" she breathed, in a sigh of content, as her head sank upon his breast.

"Such love, my Erma, that all else in this world sinks to nothingness in comparison to it. We love each other. We have each other. It is enough!"

"It is enough," she echoed, softly.

"We shall be very poor, my girl—very, very poor! Shall you care for that?" he whispered.

"Not the least in the world. Oh, Rodolph, I think I love you all the more because you are poor. I also am poor, poorer than you. I have no house and land. You have both."

"I never longed for wealth until now, to enrich you."

"But I do not want to be enriched. I love you better *so*. I love you in this rusty black suit. I love the old black felt hat that seems such a part of you that I never see it without seeing your dark face under it. Is this very foolish, dear Rodolph? Well, I love you and your poverty, and I will gladly share it with you. I do not think I could have peace, much less joy, in wealth and prosperity, Rodolph. There are some such poor shrinking flowers that they cannot bear the sunshine. I am like them, Rodolph. Is this foolish, too?"

He answered with a long, clinging kiss.

And what more of the like "foolish" things might have been said or done can never be known, for at that moment there was a light rap at the door, followed by the entrance of the boy "Rooster," who began to say in an aggrieved tone:

"Didn't you hear the tea-bell? There's Flurry and Fance and me been waiting for our tea ever so long, and nobody never come! There's Captain Bantam and mamma spooning in the drawing-room, and old Uncle Clement and Miss Ada spooning in the study, and you, too, spooning here, and—"

"What do you mean, you terrible little monster?" laughed Rodolph Wolfsohn, taking, or, rather, retaining the hand of Erma Wildering and leading her toward the dining-room.

"Well, we are most starved! That's what I mean! And Flurry went after Captain Bantam and mamma, and Fance went after Uncle Clement and Miss Ada, and I have come after you! So there now!" answered Rooster, running on before them.

From the study and the drawing-room came the other members of the family, and soon they were all assembled around the tea-table.

After tea the party adjourned to the cozy parlor, where all tête-à-têtes were given up and the evening was passed in music and general conversation.

At a late hour the two gentlemen took leave and went away.

Soon after their departure the family separated and retired.

Ada Mesh went to her room, but did not go to bed. She sat up and waited.

"The de'il had business on his hand."

And so had Ada Mesh. She had found out by seemingly careless questioning that the mail-bag with the letters to be posted usually remained on the master's writing-desk in his study through the night until early morning, when the servant would come in to light the fires and open the window shutters, and finally take the bag to carry it to the post-office.

So Miss Mesh put out her light and sat up and watched in the dark until she felt quite sure that every one in the house was in bed and asleep, with locked chamber doors.

Then she slipped off her shoes, re-lighted her candle, and cautiously crept out of her room, closing and locking the door behind her lest by some most improbable chance any one should come to the chamber and discover her absence.

She crept softly down stairs to the lower floor, and found her way to the study.

The door was locked, but the key was on the outside. She softly turned it, opened the door and entered.

The little room was already half lighted by a red and smouldering fire of mixed green and dry oak wood, intended to last through the night, and protected by a high wire fender.

The master's old arm-chair sat just where he had left it by the black walnut writing-desk, and on the latter lay the mail-bag.

She took it up and slipped silently from the room, and fled noiselessly up the stairs to her own chamber, where she secured the door before commencing her search of the letters.

She found Erma Wildering's letter to the bishop among some half dozen others that possessed no attractions for her.

She took it out, moistened the mucilage of the envelope with a wet handkerchief, and after some little difficulty and delay succeeded in opening it without mutilation.

It was dated Brighthome, January 15th, 18—.

It began by telling of her journey from New York to Virginia, and of her safe arrival at her destination, the warm welcome she received from the family, and so forth.

Miss Mesh read all this with many a "pish!" and "pshaw!" but at length, on the third page of the note, she came to what she was looking for—the subject of the approaching marriage:

"And now," ran the letter, "I have to tell you of something that will surprise you. Do you remember my mentioning the name of that gentleman who befriended me on that night when my journey had nearly come to a fatal termination through the unmanageable horse? Do you remember, also, that I told you he proved to be Mr. Rodolph Wolfsohn, a friend and neighbor of Mr. Gladden? Well, that gentleman has been a frequent, almost daily visitor at this house ever since I have been here. Mr. Gladden loves and respects him very much.

"So do I.

"Some few days ago he asked me to marry him. I refused at first; but afterward I consented. Oh, indeed, I fear that this will shock you very much. You will say that, with such a horror in my life, I should not dream of marriage, at least for a happy married life. Well, I do not dream, I do not hope for happiness. No, indeed, I do not!

"But, my friend, your poor, weak, erring child has come to this—that she would rather marry certain misery in *him* than not marry him at all! I cannot, *cannot* give him up! There! that is all about it!

"I have told him *nothing*, absolutely nothing! I dare not, must not do it! You will blame me very much; but do not lecture me.

"And do *this* much for me—take the news to my poor, dear ——. I dare to believe that *he* will be glad."

There was much more in the letter, chiefly relating to money matters; but here ended all of interest to Miss Mesh.

She got up, took pen and ink, and copied out the paragraphs here quoted, with the date of the letter, and locked it up in her dressing-case.

Then she carefully sealed up the envelope again and replaced it in the mail-bag, took the latter in her hands, and slipped down stairs to replace it.

She was careful to put it in the exact spot from which she had taken it, and to lock the door when she left the study.

As she did so the hall clock struck two.

A shudder—whether caused by the consciousness of guilt or the solitude of the hour and the place, or from all these causes combined, would be hard to tell—but a shudder of unusual violence, such as she had never felt since she had left the malarial districts of Mobile, shook the fragile frame of Ada Mesh.

"I shall get a chill if I do not hurry right away to bed," she said to herself, as she flitted along the hall.

Just then a sound fell on her ear that stopped her as suddenly as if she had been stricken with palsy.

It was the sound of a footfall in the little parlor.

She hastily blew out her light and pinched out the snuff, and watched and listened. She was not frightened, for she thought that it was some servant or some member of the family in search of medicine or something that they might have needed in the middle of the night.

So she watched and listened, only resolved to slip away up stairs as soon as she should hear the door open.

Presently the warning sound came; steps approached the door; the handle was turned.

She fled noiselessly up the stairs, but from a dark corner of the upper landing she looked over the railings to see who would come out.

The moon was shining brightly through the glass fan-light over the front door, and illuminating the front part of the hall so well that she knew she would recognize any one who might appear there.

So she watched and listened from her hiding-place.

In another moment the parlor door opened and two persons emerged from it—a man and a woman.

Miss Mesh bent over as far as she dared to scrutinize them, when, what was her amazement to recognize—Captain Blantyre and Erma Wildering!

They stood before the front door in the full light of the moonbeams. Erma's face was whiter than ever Miss Mesh had ever seen it before.

Captain Blantyre looked anxious and weary. Erma spoke.

Miss Mesh leaned over low enough to risk her neck to listen.

"You will not betray me?" pleaded Erma, in a low, pathetic voice.

"Betray you? Never!" he whispered, so earnestly that the words reached the hidden listener.

"Not even to *her*?"

"Not to her, or to any living creature! Do not fear, my poor child. Have I not as much at stake as you?"

"Oh, no! I am a woman!"

"Then do not doubt me at all. Take courage! Good-night."

And so saying the man drew the girl to his heart and kissed her!

The scandalized Miss Mesh nearly dropped with righteous indignation.

When she recovered herself the captain had gone, and Erma Wildering was flying up the stairs through the darkness.

As soon as she had passed, Ada Mesh, half idiotic from mixed emotions, fled to her room.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ANECDOTE OF JEFFERSON.

The story I am about to tell was first told by an English woman, Mrs. Wright, who was cognizant of the circumstances.

Those who know anything of Thomas Jefferson's character know that he had a deep disrelish of all hollow forms and etiquette. When Jefferson came to the Presidential chair he found considerable of these at the capital, and he at once determined, so far as lay in his power, to preserve that sterling, easy, graceful, whole-hearted simplicity which he deemed the appropriate characteristic of a republic. One of the most annoying things that met him in the outset of his exalted career was the extreme, punctilious etiquette which the foreign ambassadors, and more especially their wives, introduced and sought to establish in his own drawing-rooms. Those who would not, or could not, copy them they treated with chilling hauteur. This evil he was resolved to nip in the bud, and deeming an example better than precept, he ordered his own carriage and conversation after a manner that must have been refreshing to the shade of Ben. Franklin.

When he rode, it was without servants or outriders, and when he visited he announced his own name at the door. At the Presidential mansion the utmost simplicity of manners prevailed. In his drawing-rooms he sought to make true and hearty sociality the rule, and at his tables he made as little distinction of persons as possible. Of course there had to be exceptions, but as a rule, he placed those near him whom he deemed most worthy. The President was so pleasant, so cheerful, so kind, and so attentive to the wants and comforts of all who came near him, that no one could find a peg upon which to hang direct accusation. At length, however, the opportunity was offered, and was seized.

On a certain occasion, when the chief dignitaries of America, and of all represented nations, were assembled at the Presidential Mansion, the ambassadors from abroad seeming to feel that the dignity of their respective courts rested upon them, Jefferson received them all as nearly upon a social level as he could. The Spanish Minister was there blazing in gold and jewels, and his wife bore him company in a perfect bespanglement of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. Jefferson did not stop to consider—perhaps he did not know—the exact relative positions which court etiquette would have given to his foreign guests, and innocently enough he placed at the dinner-table the wife of the English Secretary of Legation above the wife of the Spanish Ambassador. The kind host had only thought of seating two dear friends together—the two wives of the British Minister and his secretary.

But the wife of the Spanish Minister, as was natural, was deeply offended, and laid the case before the diplomatic *corps*. She was indignant, and eloquent, and she wielded an influence; and finally it was decided that on the morrow the ministers of France and Spain should wait upon President Jefferson together, and demand of him that in future proper respect should be paid to the rank of the European potentates.

So, at a proper hour, on the following day, the two ambassadors, in full court costume, with jeweled swords at their sides, called at the President's Mansion, and requested to see His Excellency the President. They were shown into one of the drawing-rooms, and word was conveyed to Mr. Jefferson, who was engaged in the library.

Now Jefferson had been told of what had taken place, and he quickly divined the object of this visit. Pulling on one boot, he took the other in his hand, and, in his velvet dressing-gown, proceeded to the drawing-room, and having half opened the door, he turned to a servant behind him, and gave directions, in an easy manner, for the making ready of his horse. Then he entered the room, boot in hand, and smiled blandly upon his august visitors.

"Really, my friends, this is an unexpected pleasure. Be seated, be seated, I beg. No ceremony here. I heard of your arrival and would not keep you waiting."

And then, with a gleesome laugh, he sat down, and pulled on his remaining boot, having done which he plunged off-hand into a spirited conversation upon the pleasant relations then existing between their respective countries. No man living could talk more sensibly, more comprehensively, or more eloquently. By a graceful and adroit management of language he elevated the gentleman above the minister, and gave eminence to the Christian philosopher and humane heart above the frozen diplomatist. The ambassadors were at first amazed and confounded, and then interested; and very quickly the combat between republican simplicity and truth, and autocratic pomp and hollowness, was decided. The representatives of kings got away as soon as they could, and when they next met their diplomatic companions and their wives, they reported:

"It is of no use to contend. We might do it with some rulers, but not with this one. When we visit the President of the United States we may as well make up our minds to leave the royal dignity of our masters behind us."

S. C., JR.

THE BOUND BOY.

BY CAROLINE CONRAD.

It was very wicked, and Ruby Treadway knew it. Wait, and I'll tell you what it was.

Seth Plummer was her father's bound boy, or rather had been. Nobody knew who Seth's father or mother were. His mother had come to the town near, a stranger, and died without telling her name, while Seth was a baby. So the poor-house took him, and when he was eight years old he was bound to Asa Treadway, Ruby's father, till he was sixteen.

Mr. Treadway did well by Seth, as he had agreed to: clothed fed, and sent him to school three months in the year, and when his time was up, gave him fifty dollars in money, two suits of clothes and a yoke of oxen.

Seth had done his part too, and Mr. Treadway liked him so well he asked him to stay at good wages, and he stayed.

Seth Plummer was what is called a very "likely" young fellow. He had improved his opportunities for study so well that the last three winters before he was twenty-one, he taught instead of attending school, and did chores night and morning at Mr. Treadway's for his board.

He was handsome, too, tall and straight as a young poplar, with glancing hazel eyes and a ready smile, and a gentle manner toward all women, young or old, that won him hosts of friends among them.

Ruby Treadway was her father's only child, and badly spoiled. She had no mother, and had been to a boarding-school two years.

Previous to this last event, she and Seth had been great friends. But when Ruby came home from school she was "Ruby" no longer to him, but *Miss* Treadway, as she haughtily and with a great many airs informed him; she felt very kindly to him and all that, of course, but they were in different stations in life. He was her pa's hired man and she was Miss Treadway, would he please remember?

Seth was too sensible to get angry. On the contrary, he was very much amused.

"I shall have to teach that young man his place," Ruby muttered to herself. "He seems to forget that he was pa's bound boy."

A few evenings after her return home, the Baptists gave a "festival" in the school-house, half a mile away, and Mr. Treadway took Ruby over himself, because she wouldn't let Seth go with her.

Seth went, however, by himself, and Ruby's amazement was great, at the cordiality of his reception by every one. She was Miss Treadway, and had been away two years, but no one made half the fuss over her that they did over him, whom they saw every day.

She was more than ever ashamed of the superior airs she had assumed toward him, when she saw him here so tall and handsome, the most graceful gentleman in the room. But because she was wrong, and wanted to be justified to herself, she took higher airs then ever, and made very silly speeches to several about Seth having been her father's bound boy, and her astonishment at seeing him received as an equal. But she got very little sympathy, which angered her still more; and when some of her foolish speeches were reported to Seth, he only laughed as at a good joke.

After supper the young people had some games: "Constantinople," "Jacky on the Green," "Hunt the Thimble," &c., and Ruby who had not so far received so much attention as she expected, played too.

Seth was greatly in demand. The girls all liked him; but often as he was chosen in the ring, he did not choose Ruby, and the other young men did not choose her either, so often as they did the rest, perhaps because they were affraid of her airs. Naturally, she, who thought so much of herself, did not like that, and grew cross and spiteful, making more little cutting speeches, and saying ill-natured things that did not improve matters.

At last Seth, seeing what ailed her, perhaps, ventured to name her once for his partner in the game. Instead of letting him lead her into the ring, she just jerked her hand away from him, and leaving them all went and sat down by herself.

She couldn't help seeing if she looked that way, that those she had left were displeased, and none of them followed her. Nobody went near her, except Captain Mack the old bachelor, and a very old bachelor too. He was sexty-five if he was a day, and baldheaded. He wore false teeth and had the ugliest little monkey face conceivable.

She sat and talked and laughed with him, and pretended to be enjoying herself, but every little while she would steal a look at Seth. She couldn't help comparing his looks with the captain's, to save her.

By and by it was going-home time. Ruby's father had gone long ago, leaving his daughter for some of the young fellows to take care of. And captain Mack's bones being perhaps too old for any extra walking he had departed too, without offering himself as Ruby's escort. Miss Treadway began to wonder who was going home with her. Not Seth? Oh, no. She'd go alone first.

But no one offered his services. Not even Seth. The other young men tucked their girls under their arms and marched off, without seeming to see Miss Treadway at all. Seth was nowhere in sight. Ruby watched the last one depart, and then drawing her breath hard and winking very fast started off by herself.

"Thank heaven, I know my own way," she said aloud, "and I'm not afraid to go alone."

But she was. There never was a greater coward than Ruby Treadway. Her father told her she was afraid of her own shadow.

Half way from the school-house there was a piece of woods to go through. There was a good road, but of course it was lonely at that time of night.

Ruby went on pretty bravely till she got to the woods, though her heart had beat faster several times, as she fancied she heard some one behind her. But she was afraid to look back, and when she got to the woods she was afraid to go through them alone, and so she just crept into a corner of the rail-fence and got as close behind an old stump as she could and began to cry.

Suddenly she heard a quick step coming that way, and there was Seth. He knew what a coward she was and guessed why she was sitting there.

"Shall I go through the woods with you, Miss Treadway?" he said; "in my capacity of hired man of course?"

Ruby had jumped up eagerly when he first spoke, but at these last words she turned and looked at him keenly, to see if he was not making fun of her. But Seth's face was perfectly grave.

They walked on without speaking.

The moon shone through the trees, and showed Ruby how tall and straight and handsome Seth was.

"I wish he was anyone but pa's hired man," she thought. "How the girls would laugh at me!"

She meant the girls she had known at boarding-school. As for Seth, he stole a glance every now and then at Ruby's pretty, thoughtful face, and said to himself:

"She's got a face like a rose and might be as sweet as one if she was not such a fool."

Suddenly Ruby remembered that she had fancied she heard some one behind her before she got to the woods.

"You were behind me all the time," she said, looking up with an air of conviction.

"Pretty much, yes," said Seth, coolly.

Ruby's face flushed. After all she'd said about Seth at the festival, to have the others think she'd let him come home with her. It was too bad.

Seth knew what she said at the festival too, and read her thoughts now pretty correctly.

"I shan't tell anyone I came home with you, Miss Treadway," he said.

Ruby glanced up quickly and saw a twinkle of fun in his eyes.

"I hope you won't," she said angrily. "I don't want people fancying I am keeping company with you."

They were home by this time, and Ruby ran into the house without even thanking him for coming through the woods with her, or saying good-night. Seth looked vexed at first, but the next moment he laughed.

"She'll get over all that in time," he said. "I'll be patient a little longer. She used to be a sensible girl."

But Ruby on the contrary grew provoking, perhaps for the very reason that Seth did not seem to feel the slights she put upon him, or to be conscious of her superior airs.

Mr. Treadway had for some time noticed Ruby's performances disapprovingly. At last he spoke to her.

"You don't know what you're about, Ruby, when you snub Seth Plummer."

"Don't I?" said Ruby, with a toss of her head. "What makes you think so, pa?"

"Seth Plummer'll turn out somebody more than you think one of these days."

"How do you know he will pa? He's nothing but a school-master at the most now."

"I've my reasons, Ruby. You take my advice, and don't hold your head so high."

But Ruby was past advice. She had a boarding-school friend visiting her, and wouldn't have dared treat her father's hired man, as she persisted in considering Seth, any other way than loftily.

"She'll come round yet," Seth said to himself, and remained "patient."

But one day, the day after her friend had gone, a carriage stopped at Farmer Treadway's gate, and an old gentleman got out and came up the walk leaning on a gold-headed cane. He seemed very infirm, but he looked elegant and aristocratic, and Ruby ran to open the door for him, wondering who he could be.

"I'm looking for a young man called Seth Plummer," he said, in a voice that quavered with old age or excitement, or both, "he's my grandson, and I never knew it till a few days ago, and I want him. I'm rich. I was cruel to his mother, but I mean to make him my heir."

Ruby Treadway almost fainted with astonishment. This was what her father meant. He had suspected it doubtless. Oh, dear, and she'd beeen so mean to Seth. What a triumph this would be to him, and how every body would laugh at her.

And then a cruel wicked thought came to her.

Seth and her father were away off in the meadow mowing. Nobody would ever know if she sent this rich old man away without telling Seth.

And so she said that Seth had been there, but he was gone now. She didn't know where, and he was not expected back. If he wrote she'd let him know, if he would leave his address.

The old gentleman gave her his address on a card, and went away after looking at her over the rims of his gold glasses in a way that made her feel very uncomfortable. She put the card in her pocket, and was just going to shut the door, when strong hands put her aside and with a single glance of withering contempt at her, Seth Plummer strode past and went out to the old gentleman who had not yet entered his carriage. Seth had come to the house on some errand, and was just in time to hear everything.

He explained matters to the old gentleman, who was indeed his grandfather, in a way to spare Ruby as much as possible for her father's sake. But the love his true heart had felt for her in spite of everything till this, was killed at last by her meanness and treachery.

And she, as she stood looking at him, and feeling as if she should die with shame, knew now that she loved him as she should never love any other. She had indulged her vanity, her self-conceit and foolish pride, and Seth had resented none of it. But the glance he had just cast at her as he went by, told her that he despised her at last.

Seth went away with his grandfather. He became a rich man and was honored and distinguished. He kept up his friendship with Mr. Treadway, and never reminded Ruby of the wrong she had tried to do him. But he never called her anything but Miss Treadway, and she, knowing how she deserved his scorn, never doubted that, courteous as he always was, he despised her.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A New York merchant sent a number of bills, for collection, to an attorney in Michigan. One of them was against a man named Mawcombe, who was dead; and the attorney sent back the bill with the endorsement, "Mawcombe's dead," on the back of it. Several months later he received another lot of bills from the same establishment, and among them was one against Mawcombe, which the attorney sent back with the endorsement: "Mawcombe's still dead."

Old Tom Purdie, Sir Walter Scott's favorite attendant, once said: "Them are fine novels of yours, Sir Walter; they are just invaluable to me." "I am glad to hear it, Tom." "Yes, sir; for when I have been out all day hard at work, and come home very tired, and take up one of your novels, I'm asleep directly."

"Do you say I've been a hard drinker all my life?" said an old toper to an acquaintance. "Yes I do." "Well, there's where you're mistaken. At one period I didn't touch a drop for two years—in fact I drank nothing but milk." "Indeed! What two years was that?" "My first two."

"Madame," said a witty Parisian, bowing humbly as he led forward a country friend, "this is my intimate friend, M. de R., whom I have the honor of presenting to you. He is not so foolish as he looks." "Madame," said the countryman, "that is precisely where I and my friend differ."

A man who was determined never to lose his temper, was grossly insulted, while arguing a point, by his opponent, who threw a glass of water in his face. Taking out his handkerchief and wiping his face, he coolly said: "That, sir, was a digression; now for the argument."

"What's the matter, John? You look very much depressed. Has your savings-bank burst?" "No. But my sweetheart and I have had a quarrel, and I'm so afraid she'll make up with me before Christmas that I don't know what to do!"

A man was sitting for his photograph. The operator said: "Now, sir, look kind 'o pleasant. Smile a little." The man smiled, and then the operator exclaimed: "Oh! that will never do. It is too wide for the instrument."

A witty French lady, who was an "adopted" member of a famous military corps, when a cigar was lighted in her presence with the remark, "I suppose they smoke in your regiment," said, "Yes, but not in my company."

Early rising was strongly advocated by the Duke of Wellington, who used to say: "When a man turns over in bed, it is high time to turn out of it." No doubt he believed that "one good turn deserves another."

An old lady in London said to a street vagabond: "My good man, where is the Offord Arms?" to which the street vagabond, opening his own arms, replied: "Here they is, mum, an' offered freely."

"Eggs are eight cents this morning," said a country storekeeper to a testy old rural gentleman. "Well, what of it?" the old man snarled. "Eggs have been ate sence ever I can remember."

"Mr. President," said a delegate in a recent convention, "I think we should adjourn till to-morrow, as I notice that there are fifteen delegates in this convention here who are absent."

A man named Lake proposed to furnish his native town "with an exhaustless water supply," and the Mayor said he "believed that a *Lake* could do almost anything in that line."

A Canadian farmer, who recently lost a pig, after long search found him drowned in the cream-can. "So," said he, "poor piggy's cream-ated."

An old bachelor says he's been so often deceived by the chicken of the restaurant and boarding-house, that he calls it "the mocking-bird."

"Would you like to be lynched?" asked an exasperated Missouri farmer of a horse thief. "No, I'll be hanged if I do," was the reply.

It is reported that a woman is cultivating a fern farm near this city, and finds it profitable. It probably fern-ishes her a good living.

"The trouble about that *failed* beet sugar factory," said an old man, "was, that there were too many 'dead beats' in it."

It is said that some women who borrow a *quart* of milk of a neighbor always make a p'int of returning it.

One of the surest ways for a man to be robbed of his good name is to put it on his umbrella.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A young man of engaging manners and meek aspect entered a clothing store at Lewiston, Me., the other day, and desired to see a suit of clothes—coat, vest and pantaloons. They were produced and donned, when he also desired to see an overcoat. This also was put on, but did not fit. Would the obliging clerk in waiting hunt up a larger one? He went off and did so, but when he returned the meek young man had disappeared, clad in the suit and the overcoat that "didn't fit."

The other morning two men entered a pawn shop in St. Louis to redeem a valise, one of whom was recognised as Frank Rande, who killed two men and wounded another in St. Elmo, Ill., in August last. The police were at once notified, and two officers coming in, Rande, after a desperate struggle, was arrested, but not till he was dangerously and one of the policemen fatally wounded.

A member of the band at Fortress Monroe named Cogno, struck Edward S. Langdon of Battery C, Fifth Artillery, on Wednesday night o last week, a blow on the head with an iron bar, which fractured his skull, and caused his death on the next day. Cogno fled, but was arrested and lodged in Hampton jail.

A Texas paper says: "There is a robust Christian element in San Antonio. It whipped an infidel who delivered a lecture against Christianity, and sent him out of town, with a warning that hanging would be the penalty of a second attack on his part upon the Christian religion."

Near Somerset, Pa., the other day, Samuel A. Wilt, while digging a post hole, accidentally struck upon a large earthen vessel which contained twenty-seven hundred dollars in old gold and silver coins, principally Mexican dollars. The date of the newest coin is 1751.

On Wednesday evening, a week ago, in Warren county, Iowa, while Reuben Proctor was having a preliminary hearing on the charge of fatally shooting a young lady, whose father's house he was robbing, he was seized by an armed band of forty men and hanged.

At Wolfboro, N. H., one evening lately, George Adjutant and one of his sons got into a drunken fight, and a Mrs. Garland, the aged mother-in-law of Adjutant, was knocked down and trampled to death by the combatants during their furious struggle.

At Richmond, Ind., the other day, a woman fell into an open coal hole in the pavement in front of a shop, and in falling thrust her hand through a window. The shopkeeper helped her out and charged her one dollar and forty cents for the broken glass.

Mrs. Emily Means, of Dracut, Mass., sixty-one years old, who had been missing several days, was recently found dead in a pasture near her house. She was subject to fits, and it was supposed she had died in one.

An outlaw named Owen Wright, who is described as "a horrible monster," was recently lynched in Russell County, Ala., by a hundred citizens, whose conduct is approved by the press of that region.

Mrs. Bertha Valkamuth was burned to death in bed at the house of her son-in-law, George W. Coff, in Easton, Pa., one night lately. The origin of the fire, which was slight, was not ascertained.

A student named Hurst, of Lebanon Valley College, while performing on the horizontal bar in the gymnasium, made a turn which twisted his arms in such a manner as to break both of them.

A little girl three years old, daughter of Patrick McDonald, of Portland, while trying to light a lamp, the other day, set fire to her dress and was burned so badly that she soon died.

James Thompson, of Morgan, Vt., accidentally shot himself recently while loading a pistol, inflicting a wound of which he died in great agony after suffering several days.

A boy thirteen years old, the son of a widow, was drowned in Sedgewick, Me., the other day, while his mother was away from home, by falling into a well in the cellar.

Chauncey R. Marsh, an aged and respected citizen of Warren, Conn., fell from his wagon while returning from church on Sunday, recently, and was fatally injured.

A Kentucky farmer recently learned that tobacco leaves are fatal to cows, by losing three valuable animals which ate some of the weed with their hay.

At Denver, Ind., a few days ago, two men were run over and killed while trying to get a hand-car out of the way of an approaching train.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE EYE.

BY MRS. EMILY THORNTON.

Of deepest interest is the human eye!
To me each glance is full of mystery!
I love to watch its changing moods, and tell
The thoughts that lurk within the heart's deep cell!
There is a meaning in a sudden gaze
That oft belies the tongue. The oily ways
Of speech are baffled by a flashing look
From eyes more true than word, or act, or book.

Sometimes I've watched young children at their play,
And heard their roguish laughter roll away
On sounding echoes, but the shout of glee
Was never needed to impress on me
The fact that they were happy. Dancing eyes
Of blue, and brown, and hazel, sage and wise
And mischief loving, satisfied me quite
That each young heart was full of pure delight.

I passed a maiden fair upon the street,
Her eyes, sad, mournful black ones, turned to meet
My own, while such a rush of untold grief
Flashed from their depths, that "*no relief*"
Seemed moaned out mockingly upon the air
By unknown voices, while such fell despair
Brooded beneath each lid, that with a start
I cried, "*She* dies *soon* of a broken heart!"

From a strange window once I chanced to see
Two great wild eyes bent threat'ningly on me;
It needed but that long, unmeaning stare
To tell that some poor maniac was there.
And when a shrill and frenzied laugh rang out
Upon the wind, followed by scream and shout,
No act the truth more plainly could unfold
Than that one glare from his wild eyes had told.

Eyes, by a language all their own reveal
Inworkings which the speech would fain conceal;
Malicious thoughts leave an impression there,
Thrust forth by stealthy glance or moody stare.
Hate, too, is visible, and bright the fire
Fed by sharp glances filled with bitter ire:
The flash of wrath, the look of wild affright,
Of cool contempt and scorn and biting spite.

Just so sweet love is painted on the eye,
And buoyant hope and gentle charity,
While mourning ones are often cheered and blest
When sympathetic looks upon them rest.
If such the magic of the human eye,
If such the truths revealed to passers by,
See that the heart from which all thoughts arise
Be right and holy that it teach the eyes.

MISS WYND'S ENEMY;

OR, THE

Mystery of The Cypresses.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A GHASTLY FARCE.

The half-hour of grace which Uplock had allotted to the mother and daughter passed all too quickly to them. Punctually to the moment the villain returned, bringing the Mexican priest with him. Mrs. Wynd and Flor were still sitting upon the bench in the veranda. Neither arose, but after one look at Uplock's grim, hard, and wickedly-relentless visage, they fixed their gaze upon the priest.

"This is the lady, padre," said Uplock, indicating Flor. "She is a little coy," and his dry lips were drawn tightly back over his long teeth in a ghastly smile. "You need not mind her responses. Say the words as quickly as possible. Make her my wife!"

The priest looked from Uplock to Flor and back again in bewilderment. The mystery surrounding the entire affair, the hidden island in the swamps, the secluded house, the appearance of Mrs. Wynd, the manner in which this strange marriage was being conducted, everything puzzled him.

"Go on!" said Uplock, in a voice of command. "Proceed with the ceremony!"

"Certainly, certainly!" responded the priest, nervously. "Be so good as to take your places. You have a marriage-license?"

"Of course," declared Uplock. "I want everything legal, you know. The lady must be my wife as securely as the law can make her. Come, Flor!"

He held out his hand to the girl, glowering upon her with a look of menace that might have made a brave man quail. But she, white as death, with a dauntless look in her young dusk eyes, stared beyond him at the priest.

"Come!" said the latter, stirred to the soul by that strange gaze—"I am ready!"

"But I am not!" answered Flor, calmly. "I would not marry that man to save my life!"

"Nor to save your mother's life?" questioned Uplock. "If you persist in this refusal I will slay her before your eyes."

"Flor," cried Mrs. Wynd, her noble face with its dark beauty glorified by self-sacrifice and tenderest love, "if you marry him to save my life I will never forgive you. What! Swear to a lie? Perjure your soul by a false oath? No, no. Be true to yourself; be true to the principles I have inculcated in you; be true to your God!"

Uplock sneered.

"A sentimental woman is a fool!" he muttered. "I am not to be balked, Flor. Are you willing to let your mother die before your eyes?"

"Death is not so terrible as the life you would give us," said Flor. "We will die, my mother and I—we will die together!"

Uplock laughed savagely.

"You are strung up to the pitch of exaltation!" he exclaimed, mockingly. "You are willing to die—altogether too willing. I do not intend to kill you, my pretty Flor. You are too lovely to bury away under the soil. Besides, you are worth too much to me. I have risked so much that I am willing now to risk everything. Continue to refuse to marry me, and I will marry you by force, destroy your mother, and take you to New Orleans and put you in a private mad-house, where you will soon end your days. As your husband, I shall of course become your heir!"

"I still refuse!"

"Then I shall carry out my threats," said Uplock, furiously. "I'll not be cheated by you, nor driven into exile by two weak women. I'll not be balked in the purpose of my life, the purpose for the achievement of which I have schemed and plotted these twenty years and more. Priest, go on!"

"It is impossible, Capitano," said the padre, with considerable agitation. "The lady is not willing. Such a marriage is a mockery!"

"Perhaps this will remove your scruples," said Uplock, drawing a revolver and presenting it at the unfortunate Mexican. "If I am to inaugurate a holocaust, I may as well begin with you. Continue to refuse at your peril!"

A cold perspiration started out upon the priest's forehead.

"I assure you, Senor Capitano," he stammered, "such a marriage would not be legal in any country in Christendom."

"That consideration need not affect you. Go on—or I will blow your brains out!"

The priest glanced toward the deadly, shining tube within a foot of his temple, and succumbed. He knew, as well as Flor and her mother knew, that Uplock's was no idle threat, that the villain would not hesitate to kill him, and life seemed doubly sweet to him now that he was likely to lose it.

"I submit," he said, "under protest. And may God judge you, Senor Capitano! I will marry you, to save this poor girl and her mother from death, or a worse fate!"

The shining tube was not lowered. Uplock's inky eyes were fixed upon him in a terrible gaze.

The priest had his epitome of church-service in his pocket. He drew it forth, but a sort of blindness had come upon him in his terror. He could scarcely make out the words.

"Do you, Senor Capitano, take this woman to be your wedded wife?" he stammered, not asking to see Uplock's marriage-license, nor inquiring the names of bride and groom.

"I do!" declared Uplock, in a ringing voice.

"And you, Senorita," said the padre, tremulously, "do you take this man to be your wedded husband?"

The girl's courage was equal to the demand upon it. Her mother's hand pressed hers reassuringly. Her mother's voice whispered her not to yield—to be true to herself, and her God.

"I will not!" cried Flor. "I loathe and detest him! Marry *him?* Love *him?* Honor *him?* Impossible!"

The priest looked helplessly at Uplock.

"Go on!" said the villain. "Proceed as if she had assented."

One look into those inky eyes, all ablaze—one glance at the leveled revolver, and the priest went on, more dead than alive.

Uplock promptly replied to all the questions. Flor as promptly protested her abhorrence of her enemy, and her refusal to marry him. No stranger marriage ceremony was ever performed upon this wide earth. No more desperate, cruel, and wicked bridegroom ever stood up and made the responses. No whiter or more agonized bride was ever seen. No more perturbed, anxious, frightened and bewildered priest ever existed.

The farce was soon over. The padre in a faltering voice uttered the final words:

"I now pronounce you man and wife. And whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

Uplock laughed aloud in a savage glee.

"You hear, all of you?" he exclaimed. "You are my wedded wife, Flor. Mine in accordance with the law; mine, if you should die to-night, or be taken next week to a mad-house. You are my wife, and I'll warrant that I can play Petruchio to your Katharine, my pretty Flor, and that within a week, if you live so long, you will be the humblest, meekest woman alive. Padre, make out the marriage certificate!"

"You know that I am not your wife!" cried Flor, her dusk eyes flashing. "The whole thing has been a mockery. Good father, do not give him the certificate—"

"If he should refuse I should be compelled to use my patent persuader," said Uplock, again leveling his revolver. "Here is the printed form, padre. The names are filled in, dates, and all. Just sign your name at the bottom."

He laid the document on a table, with a pocket inkstand and a pen. The padre hesitated, then yielded, and affixed his name.

"Before I suffer you to go free," said Uplock, "you shall swear such an oath to keep this affair secret as you shall never dare betray even in the confessional, and in your dying hour, my worthy padre." And Uplock restored the certificate to his pocket. "I am not through this business yet, but when I shall have completed my work you may rest assured, all of you, that I shall have no fear of betrayal or circumvention."

He glared about him in triumph.

"And now," he added, after a moment's pause, "the priest may go back to the yacht. No, upon consideration, he may remain here. You have tasted of terror this morning, my good padre, and you have seen it best to yield to superior force. I commend your wisdom. This girl is my wife. Advise her to follow your example, and make the best of what can't be helped. I shall absent myself from you all a few hours, but shall return to my bride before evening. Let me find her submissive, or you will all repent it!"

The priest sat down in the nearest chair. Old Phillis was crying in the background. Sam was grinning with delight at his master's triumph. Mrs. Wynd and Flor sat crushed beneath the weight of a horrible despair.

"Before I go," said Uplock, "I may as well give you a few hints which may serve to guide you. I have won this little game, Juliet. If Flor were to die to-night, this little document," and he tapped his breast, "would make me her heir. And if it did not, I am her remote kinsman and her successor to the Wynd estates!"

Mrs. Wynd shuddered.

"As I have won," continued Uplock, "I am willing to be generous. Flor is my wife. From this moment I shall consider and treat her as such. In the few hours which I shall give you for reflection, if you choose to take a wise course, Juliet, and advise your daughter to submit to the inevitable, I will grant you your life and liberty. You shall return with us to The Cypresses, and I will circulate some wonderful story of your rescue that will account to the world for your year's absence. We will say that you were picked up by a Mexican vessel and taken to Mexico, where you have been ill ever since—delirious, insane, or something of that sort. The thing can be easily managed."

Mrs. Wynd's lip curled. She did not answer.

"You loved me once as a brother," pursued Uplock. "You trusted me above all others. I am as worthy that love as ever. We will forget our little misunderstandings, and I will show you and Flor that I can do you both credit in the eyes of men. I will run for a public office; people shall speak of me as the richest and most influential man in Louisiana. I will honor you, be again to you what I was once—"

"You were always a traitor to me!" interrupted Mrs. Wynd. "I did trust you, and how did you repay that trust? I married a noble man, whose only fault was his poverty. He had talent and was ambitious. He would have made an honored name for himself had he lived. I loved him with all my soul, with all the ardor of my passionate, undisciplined nature. He was high-spirited and sensitive. He trusted you as I did, and you, viper as you are, how did you repay his trust and mine? You told me that he had boasted of marrying me for my money. You told me that his heart had been given to another woman, and that he esteemed me only for my wealth. God forgive me for believing you! But I had known you all my life long; how could I believe that my brother had lied to me? I accused my husband of marrying me for my money; of baseness which he would have scorned. You had given me proofs—a letter, you remember. I flourished it in his face. He denied having written it, although it seemed his own handwriting. Beside myself with wounded love and pain, I told him that he lied; I bade him go to the woman he loved; I ordered him from my house, and threatened, if he did not go, to have him thrust forth by the servants. He went—oh, God, forgive me for my wickedness! I must have been mad! But he was innocent. You had worked all this wretchedness—you, Garr Uplock!"

Uplock did not flinch before those accusing eyes. He laughed, indeed, as if the affair had been a good joke.

"Wynd is dead," he replied, "and there's no use raking up those old matters. I made all the trouble myself, I am willing to own it. I have gone too far in other things to play the saint. You wouldn't believe me if I assured you of my innocence, and an acknowledgment of the truth may inspire you with a wholesome awe and terror of me. I told you a lie about Wynd, and more than one. I loved you and hated him. I forged that love-letter you found in his desk. I made up the story about the other woman. Wynd loved you with his whole soul; he was true to you; and when you drove him forth with your wild words, you drove from you a fond lover and faithful husband. The knowledge of this fact may compensate you for your rejection of me. The acknowledgment avenges me upon you. Wynd is dead, and you can sigh and sigh and cry in vain. He'll never come back to you!"

Mrs. Wynd sank back, faint unto death.

Uplock turned to Flor.

"My dear wife," he said, mockingly, "you have seen of what I am capable. Yet I can be kind and goody-goody, as you well know. I love you, and am willing to make you a good and tender husband. If you are wise you'll take advantage of my weakness. Yet I am free to own that I can live without you. If, after a week's taming, you remain obstinate, you know the fate before you. You are my wife. Your mother's fate is in your hands, as I've told you a dozen times, and now repeat for the last. I shall return a few hours hence, and if I find you duly impressed with my capabilities, and in tractable mood, we will leave this place in the yacht to-morrow. If not—"

He did not conclude the sentence in words, but the dangerous glare in his eyes contained a threatening which made the women shrink.

He called to Sam, unlocked the door, and master and man, after securing the place, went to the kitchen.

Here Uplock sat down to a breakfast which Suke had prepared for him. After he had eaten, he ordered Hank and Dirk to keep guard over his prisoners, and strode down to the shore, entered his row-boat, crossed the lake, passing by his yacht, and plunged into one of the innumerable creeks leading into the recesses of the swamps.

Meanwhile, Miss Wynd and Flor retired into the chamber of the former, and gave way to their mingled rejoicings at their re-union and their despair at the fate in store for them.

"It is hard to die," said the girl, sorrowfully; "but, dear mother, we shall find father in heaven. He was true to you: he loved you—"

"But will he ever forgive me, even there?" cried Mrs. Wynd, sobbing. "I could kneel at his feet in pleading, but he must scorn me, hate me, as I deserve! Oh, I must have been mad! And I have loved him always—I love him still, with all my soul! Oh, Laurence, Laurence, if you could only know my repentance, my anguish of remorse—"

"Don't, mother; don't, darling!" interrupted Flor, in a tone of distress. "If my father is in Heaven, he must know. And he is there: so do not cry. Do not give way like this. We need all our strength—"

"And you are so brave! Forgive me, Flor. I had forgotten that Ralph Roselyn has been killed by this remorseless villain and that your heart is broken. Oh, Flor, God will avenge us!"

"We shall die together," said the girl, a holy calm in her uplifted eyes. "Mother, I cannot be *his* wife: not even to save your dear life! For if I so saved it, you would be spared to a living death. Father is dead. Ralph is dead. Let us die too, and rejoin them in a world where sorrow is unknown!"

They communed together, making up their minds to meet with calmness the last dread tragedy of their lives.

Two or three hours passed. Then a cry from the Mexican padre outside electrified them. The sound of pistol shots reached their ears. They rushed out into the veranda. The priest and Phillis were peering excitedly through the jalousies.

"Help's done come!" cried Phillis. "The good Lord's heard us! There's help! They're a shootin' dem debble niggers. See! See!"

Mrs. Wynd and Flor rushed to the jalousies.

They beheld a scene of violence on the sward in front of the kitchen that thrilled them with new life and hope. The dwarf Dirk lay on the grass, evidently dead, shot through the heart. The burly Hank was reeling, and even as they looked, fell headlong. The woman Suke, shrieking in her awful terror, was upon her knees, her arms outstretched in pleading.

And the victors? They were Mayne and Dalant, the Californian and the Cadien. Joe hovered in the rear, shooting wildly in the air.

After the disappearance of Mrs. Wynd from Dalant's island, as chronicled, and after a vain effort to find her, Mayne had gone back to the Cadien's cabin to await the return of its owner. He had been compelled to wait some hours, Dalant having accompanied the blacks home with their helpless prisoner.

The story Hank and Dirk had told about a conflict with Mayne had been a complete fiction. There had been no fight and no encounter.

The Cadien had returned in due time to his hut, and Mayne appealed to him for assistance. He told him that the lady was not Uplock's wife, but his prisoner. He appealed to his sense of justice and humanity, and the simple-souled hunter promised to assist him in rescuing the poor lady from her captivity. They had, therefore, after procuring a hot breakfast as a precaution against malarial influences, set out with Joe for Swamp Island.

They had seen the yacht lying at anchor in the lake, and Mayne believed that Uplock had come to torture and perhaps destroy his captive. Taking a circuitous course to avoid the view of any one on the yacht, they approached the island from the opposite side. On landing, Mayne reconnoitred, and ascertained that only the blacks were to be seen. As they were desperate, he counselled an attack upon them without delay.

The intruders approached the kitchen. Before they could speak, Hank and Dirk who were both armed, opened fire upon them. They returned the fire with deadly effect, both blacks being killed.

As Suke knelt before him Mayne demanded the keys of the house. She gave them up without a word. Mayne sped towards the dwelling, unlocked the door, and stood within the veranda—face to face with Mrs. Wynd and her daughter!

His gaze wandered from one to the other. His amazement at beholding Flor may be imagined.

"Mr. Mayne!" cried the girl. "You here! Thank God! And Ralph! is he safe?"

"I believe so. I trust so. Our good friend Dalant will guide us to him. Where is Uplock?"

"Gone away for a few hours!" said Mrs. Wynd. "Let us fly at once! He may be back any minute!"

The advice was too good not to be heeded. The Cadien approved it. The poor padre was wild for flight. Phillis was eager to be off, and Mrs. Wynd and Flor, trembling with excitement, waited to ask no questions, but put on their hats and hurried forth into the fresh air.

"We shall have to take one of the boats belonging to the island in addition to the one in which we came," said Mayne. "Dalant, you and the priest, with Phillis, can occupy one. Joe and I will row the other, with the ladies. You shall take the lead, and guide us to our yacht."

They hurried down to the shore on the side of the island farthest from Uplock's yacht, found a second boat, and embarked in the order Mayne had indicated.

Then they pushed off. No one spoke until the lake had been safely crossed and they were in the shadow of the great swamp cypresses.

Then mother and daughter embraced with rejoicings.

Mayne looked at them with a grave, calm face, not ceasing to ply his oars. Mrs. Wynd looked from her daughter to him, and a shade of anguish passed over her brunette features.

"Dear mother, are you not happy?" whispered Flor. "Perfectly happy? Ralph is alive—we are safe—God has protected us."

"Yet there is still one thing lacking," whispered Mrs. Wynd. "I could die if I might only be forgiven the terrible error of my youth. Am I selfish to cloud your joy with my life-long grief? I must not forget my mercies. Free! Free at last! Free, after being doomed to a living grave! Thank God!"

"This way!" called the Cadien from the foremost boat, plunging into a narrow stream. "We will take a short cut, *mon ami*. I am sure I know the spot you have described to me where your yacht and your friends wait. We will follow this stream, and others, for some miles, cross a lake, and enter a river which will lead us straight to our goal. It's a queer, almost impassable route, but we'll manage it. Follow."

CHAPTER XL.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

The hut in the centre of the square in the coiners' swamp settlement presented a strange sight at the moment when Roselyn was dragged into it by his captors.

In the centre of the large room was a great furnace in full operation. Around it were all the appurtenances necessary to the nefarious business practised there: pots for melting base metal, dies for coins, stamps for lying inscriptions, machines for milling the edges, and many other articles not necessary to enumerate.

The process of making the spurious coin was in full operation. Two or three men, in their shirt sleeves, were hard at work.

One of these was the leader of the gang, the man whose periodical visits were occupied in making the coins to take away with him.

This man, Captain Sly, was of singular aspect, tall and brawny of frame, with iron-gray hair, and a long iron-gray beard that fell on his breast. He wore spectacles that screened his eyes. He was soft and still in his movements, stealthy as a cat, and well did he deserve his name of "Sly."

He had been about to go forth in search of his missing allies, who had gone down to the shore to look for some sign of Lifer or the whiskey-hunters, whose return was impatiently expected by both the captain and his men, when the crowd burst in upon him with their prisoner.

For the next few minutes a perfect Babel reigned.

Lifer told his adventures. Jinks told his, and those of his fellows. Then Hotchkiss commanded attention, declaring that he had endeavored to obey orders and destroy Roselyn; that he had failed; but here was Roselyn, a prisoner and helpless, and Cap'n Sly could do with him what he would.

The chief of the great Swamp Gang fixed his gaze upon our hero. There was a strange joy expressed in the voice of Captain Sly, a strange triumph, as he exclaimed:

"So, you are here, eh? You are Ralph Roselyn, son of 'the just judge' of New Orleans?"

Roselyn bowed assent. He was calm and cool, even in the midst of his great peril. If he had terrible anxieties he carefully concealed them.

"You are in the employ of the police?" questioned Captain Sly. "You have come here to spy out the great Swamp Gang and deliver its members up to the law? Look at us. You see us in the very midst of our unlawful work. But, my fine fellow, I don't think you'll capture us, or split on us."

The coiners cheered.

"I am no detective officer," said Roselyn, quietly. "I came upon this island last night while searching for a lady who is hidden somewhere in these solitudes."

Captain Sly laughed sneeringly.

"Tell that story to the marines!" he exclaimed. "You left New Orleans commissioned to search for us. I caused two men to ship with you under secret orders from me to prevent your entrance into the swamps and to prevent your return to New Orleans. Perhaps matters have turned out as well as I could have desired. You are a detective and a spy. And the punishment of a spy is *death!*"

Again the coiners cheered.

"You have killed one of our best men," continued Captain Sly, "and he must be avenged. You must die, and your men must die also—every soul of them. They shall be hanged within an hour. As for you, the sooner you are disposed of, the better. You shall be shot!"

"He ought to be hanged, Cap'n!" said Jinks. "Shootin' 's too good for him!"

"It makes little difference to me—still, I prefer shooting," said Captain Sly, coolly. "This is my last day here, Jinks. When I leave here to-night with my bags of coins, I bid you an eternal farewell. You shall be captain in my stead. I shall make over to you all my authority, with its duties and profits, cares and anxieties. But I shall be captain for to-day, and I will dispose of this Roselyn to suit myself."

Jinks could not conceal his surprise at his chief's communication, nor his delight at his own announced promotion.

"Going away, Cap'n?" he ejaculated. "For good?"

"For good!" replied the captain. "I am going to emigrate, dig out, try a new country. Old Markee 'll circulate the coins for you, with his agents, same as ever. I wish you all luck, boys. Jinks 'll make a good captain, and you'll all make your fortunes. The business is good, and old Markee is prudence itself. I've done my best for you and myself for two years, and am willing to retire and give a new man a chance. I took a last turn at the dies this morning, not to go away empty-handed. Now, boys, for our fun!"

One of the men was detailed to watch the furnace, the others prepared for the expected "fun." A rope was secured, and then Jinks begged that "a regular affair" might be made of it, and Martin, Dillon, and the black cook, might share their master's fate.

"Very well," said Capt. Sly, carelessly. "So be it. Fetch the others."

Some little time was consumed in bringing the two seamen and the cook. All the coiners assembled in the central square of the settlement. Even the women and children congregated there full of delight and expectancy. Big Lib inquired jeeringly after Roselyn's feet. Hotchkiss and Robinson made themselves heroes of the occasion. Ropes were swung over branches of a great cottonwood tree, and adjusted to the necks of the prisoners.

They were all wonderfully calm and collected. Roselyn's quiet self-possession inspired even the black cook with courage. Death stared them in the face, but it is doubtful if any one of the others suffered a tithe of Roselyn's agony. He thought of Flor left unprotected in the hands of an unprincipled guardian. He thought of Mrs. Wynd, imprisoned, perhaps dying, in this malarial region. He thought of his unfulfilled mission, his young life cut short in its early promise; of his ambitions, hopes and love. To die thus—to die like a dog! Ah! it was horribly bitter!

They had removed his bonds from his feet; his hands were tied behind him. He stood up, and his uplifted gaze seemed to pierce the heavens. With all his soul he prayed in that moment for deliverance, and even while he prayed he gathered strength to meet that deliverance from his enemies, even though it might be through the gate of death.

Captain Sly waited until the man at the furnace was able to leave his work and come forth among his comrades. Then he addressed his followers in a somewhat lengthy speech, inciting their hatred against "the just judge" and his son. He rehearsed the particulars of Roselyn's escape from old Markee's den in New Orleans, informed his men that Mayne, Roselyn's companion, was dead, and concluded:

"It is time, boys. Away with the spy. Swing him off!"

The men sprang to the ropes.

They had scarcely begun to draw them up, when a sudden crash of musketry filled the place!

A body of soldiers, in the United States uniform, had silently taken position in the alleys, completely closing every way of egress from the square.

And as the outlaws discovered this fact, an officer in command yelled to the coiners to surrender!

A scene of frightful confusion, turmoil, and bloodshed followed!

The prisoners effected their release and flew to the protection of the new-comers. Captain Sly, with an awful oath, looked around him for some way of escape. There was none. He was caught like a rat in a trap. As he realized this, as the enemy closed in upon him, as Jinks fell dead upon one side of him, and Lifer at the other, he uttered a yell of frightful despair, and leaping forward discharged his revolver three times at Roselyn, missing him every time. Then he turned the weapon against himself, and fell, mortally wounded.

The death of their leader discomfitted the surviving coiners, and they made prompt and unconditional surrender.

When they had been secured, our hero heard an explanation of his timely rescue.

The soldiers had come in a vessel that had been hired for the purpose by the government. They had tracked *The Mermaid*, and had been guided to the retreat of the Swamp Gang by one of its members, who had betrayed his comrades to save himself. This traitor was one of the men whom our hero had seen in the back room of the house of old Markee in New Orleans.

A shout from one of the men who was engaged in counting the dead coiners drew the attention of all who heard it. He was bending over the prostrate body of Captain Sly. Roselyn and others went to him, and as they came up he stripped off the gray wig and beard from the dead man's face.

Roselyn recoiled in stupefaction.

The face, grim and awful in death, ghastly in its grisly pallor, was the face of Garr Uplock!

This, then, was the secret of Uplock's recent prosperity. It was thus that he had acquired his fortune! He was Captain Sly, chief of the coiners.

After due explanations, when the marvel of the discovery had lessened, Roselyn, full of anxiety concerning Mayne, returned to his yacht with his men. And then he saw a long, low schooner lying near at anchor—the same schooner the manœuvres of which had excited the alarm of Uplock on the Gulf, and which he thought he had outwitted.

The women and children of the coiners were taken on board the schooner, filling the air with their wails. The prisoners, heavily ironed, were taken below. The soldiers buried Uplock and his followers where they fell, and destroyed the huts and furnace, but carried to the schooner the dies and machines, the coins and other evidence, which were to convict the outlaws.

As the yacht raised anchor to return to her former halting-place two boats entered the lake from a creek, within easy hail of the two vessels.

These boats contained the rescued party from Swamp Island.

The first impulse of Mayne on seeing the vessels was to retreat. The next instant he recognized the yacht, and began rowing toward her with all his might.

He was recognized before he came alongside. Roselyn recognized Flor also, to his amazement, and her mother.

The joyous reunion that followed must be left to the imagination of the reader. The lovers were reunited; Mrs. Wynd was safe; their trials were past, and a great bliss, a joy beyond description, succeeded.

The schooner and the yacht, with the vessel that had belonged to Uplock, returned to New Orleans in company. Their arrival made the sensation of the day. Mrs. Wynd became the heroine of popular admiration and curiosity. She was welcomed back as from the dead; her old friends thronged about her, and her old place in society welcomed her back. Flor received her share of popular adulation, while Mayne and Roselyn were the heroes of the hour, fêted, caressed, and honored.

It was a week after the return. Old Markee and his agents were in jail awaiting trial, with the prisoners of the Swamp Gang. It was near the hour of dark. Mayne and Roselyn were at Mrs. Wynd's house in Lafayette, seated in the veranda with their hostess and her daughter.

Presently, Roselyn and Flor arose and vanished into the dusky alleys of the garden, billing and cooing in lover-fashion. Roselyn was begging his betrothed to name the day of their marriage, and she had consented to marry him a month later—a concession to his passionate pleadings.

Mayne looked after the young pair and sighed.

"They are well matched," he said. "Your daughter is very lovely, Mrs. Wynd, and your son will be worthy of her."

The lady did not answer.

"I shall leave New Orleans to-morrow for California," said Mayne, presently. "My testimony against the wretches in prison can be left in the form of an affidavit. I shall hope to hear from my young friend Roselyn of your continued prosperity, madam."

"Going?" asked Mrs. Wynd, in agitation. "You are going away?"

"To-morrow."

"When shall you return?"

"Probably never," replied Mayne, in a tone of melancholy. "This has been a pleasant episode—"

"You will never return! I shall never see you after to-night!" cried Mrs. Wynd, in a passionate despair. "I cannot let you go without telling you something of myself. Gar Uplock confessed to me at Swamp Island that he had wrecked my life. He forged a letter bearing my husband's name that maddened me with jealousy. I treated my husband as if he had been a dog; I drove him from me—"

"Madam!"

Mrs. Wynd arose, made a swoop forward, and fell on her knees at his feet. A ray of light from the room within fell on her beautiful features, pale and convulsed with agony.

"Forgive me!" she cried. "I loved you always. I love you now. I have been beside myself. Oh, Laurence, Laurence, my husband, I have known you from the first. Have I sinned past all forgiveness? Have you ceased to love me? If so, I pray God to let me die!"

Her dusky head drooped lower in anguish and self-abasement. Very tenderly Mayne stooped and raised her, higher and higher, to his very bosom. And he held her there in a long and fervid embrace, straining her to his heart as if he would never let her go from him again.

"Juliet! Wife!" he whispered, and his voice was full of sweetness and an infinite joy. "I have never ceased to love you, never. I forgive you, darling. I take you back, thus and so, to my heart, never, never to let you go again."

He showered kisses upon her, and she nestled on his breast, pale and breathless with her happiness.

It was so that Flor and Roselyn found them.

"Flor," said her mother, as the astonished girl paused near them, "this is your father, Laurence Wynd. He was going to-morrow. I had nearly lost him again, but now he will stay with us always."

We need not linger over the scene that followed.

Laurence Wynd told of his life in California as Francis Mayne; how he had made his fortune there, and how a longing had come upon him to see his wife again—the wife he had always worshiped in spite of her cruelty—and how he had obeyed that impulse.

"Providence sent you home to us, Laurence," said his happy wife. "God has been good to us. After the storm has come the great sunshine—after the sorrow the overwhelming joy."

A month later Ralph Roselyn and Flor Wynd were married with great ceremony. Before that time the members of the Swamp Gang had been sent to prison under sentences that might well remind them of their old aversion—"the just judge!"

The Cypresses is to-day the home of happiness. Years have come and gone since the occurrence of the events we have narrated, and to-day Judge Wynd and his still beautiful wife are leaders of society in New Orleans, and are honored and loved wherever their names are known. Ralph Roselyn is in the prime of manhood, a noble worker in the world, and his lovely wife and their beautiful children make his home at Roselyn an earthly Paradise. And although slavery is a thing of the past, old Phillis still plays the role of housekeeper at The Cypresses with an added importance and portliness; and Matthew and Joe stand greatly in awe of her.

THE END.

In next week's *Ledger* we shall begin the publication of a new story by our popular contributor, LEON LEWIS, entitled—

THE LORD OF STRATHMORE

OR,

THE HIDDEN CRIME.

This is a story of old English baronial life, and shows how ambition and avarice, uncurbed by conscience, may work incalculable evil and misery in the noblest families. It makes a very interesting narrative.

BAITED MUTTON.

A SERIO-COMIC SKETCH.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

If you are tough and hardy, or if you are weak and worn, and want a winter's sport, or part of a winter's sport, attach yourself to genial company, with all the appliances of arms and provisions for far-away camp life, and seek that magnificent chain of forest lakes, in the northern part of Oxford County, Maine, commencing at Umbagog, and extending almost to the Canada border,—find old Rich, the veteran guide of that region, and get him to pilot you to your camping-ground. You will have to rethatch your hut, and cut your own wood, and do your own cooking. Of course, you have brought pork, and beans, and hard-tack, and butter; for the rest you will go out and catch big trout through the ice, and run down fat moose in the deep snow—this latter if you can handle yourself nimbly on snow-shoes.

Not many years ago, in company with Ben Gilroy, Harry Rusk, and Abner Jackson, I went up to the lakes and camped out for a February's sport. We were sure of catching plenty of trout, and having plenty of fun, but we were not so sure of the moose or deer. In view of a possible lack in this latter direction, we purchased four fat sheep on our way, and took them with us.

We had secured a snug, comfortable camp on the upper shore of Umbagog, and had made ready for sport, when we discovered that a party of congenial spirits from the Crooked River District had pitched within two miles of us, over toward Welokenebacook. Three of them we knew—Doll Smith, Tim Young and Eben Foltz. They were good fellows enough in their way, but not exactly the kind of men to find *healthful* recreation far away from home.

One day Doll Smith and Tim Young came over to our camp. We asked them what luck they had had in fishing that day.

"We hain't fished," said Doll. "But say, old boys, have you bagged a moose or a deer?"

"Neither," said Abner.

"Then what's that hangin' up outside?"

"O, that's a quarter of mutton." And we explained to him.

It had turned out as Rich had warned us. We had found no traces of heavy game, and on that morning we had killed and dressed one of our fat wethers. Both Doll and Tim eyed our mutton longingly, but did not ask for any of it. As they were ready to go away, said Tim:

"You hain't seen no moose nor deer?"

"No, not a sign."

"Neither have we," pursued Tim, with an ominous twist of his head; "but we've seen a catamount. Have you seen him?"

We had not.

"Good gracious! but he's a wollopper! Eben Foltz declares it's a regular panther. He's as big as a full-grown hound, and as savage as all-possessed. I got a shot at him yesterday, but missed him. I tell you, we keep our cubby-hole closed nights. I shouldn't want that chap to light on me when I was asleep." And with that, Tim and Doll went away.

Very likely, we thought, there might have been a wild-cat (the *loup cervier*) prowling around, but we had no fears. The animal is dangerous enough if you give him the advantage, but he is not apt to seek human habitations, nor to trouble a man who does not first trouble him.

On the next morning we had a surprise. A hind quarter of our mutton was missing! To avoid impregnating the meat with the smoke of our pipes (and somebody's pipe was going nearly all the time when we were in camp) we had hung it upon the stout branch of a tree just outside.

What had become of the mutton?

"The catamount!" suggested Ben Gilroy.

"Yes," said Abner, nodding and winking,—"*Tim Young's catamount.*"

Aye—there could be no mistake. The rascals of the Welokenebacook camp had stolen our mutton, and the story of the huge and ferocious wild beast had been told to us as a blind!

That afternoon we met Tim and Eben Foltz on the lake. We had left Ben in camp, and Tim inquired for him.

"Ben's on track of the catamount," said Abner, quietly.

"Eh! have you seen the crittur?" cried Tim.

"No; but he walked off with a piece of our mutton last night."

"You don't say so?"

"It's a fact. He must be a big one."

On the day following, Abner Jackson met Tim Young. Tim was anxious to know if we had caught the catamount.

"No," said Abner, "but we're going to set a sure trap for him. If he's around to-night, we'll have him to a dead certainty."

"Good!" said Tim. "But how are you goin' to do it?"

"We killed another sheep this morning, and we'll hang a hind quarter just where we hung the last one, and Ben. has rigged a big box-trap, so that the animal can't get at the mutton without going into it; and, once in it, he is a gone coon, or, a gone catamount."

"I hope you'll catch him. The idea of the trap is good."

That night we hung a quarter of mutton out, and Ben and Harry Rusk made a huge trap of withed logs, which they set with a "figure-of-four" spring under the tree.

On the next morning the mutton was gone, and the trap had been sprung; but we found no catamount. After breakfast we shouldered our rifles and started for the Welokenebacook camp. As we approached we observed Doll Smith pop away out of sight as though he had been on the watch. When we entered the camp we found the inmates smoking and playing euchre.

"Hi! What's up?" cried Tim, when he saw us with our rifles.

"We're after the catamount," said Abner. "We thought we found his tracks on the snow-crust, but it may have been a dog."

"Did the critter come last night?"

"Yes, and sprang the trap without getting caught."

"Then he didn't get the mutton?"

"Yes, he did; but it'll be the dearest morsel he ever set his teeth to. We'll find him somewhere before the day is up."

"Eh! Ab., what d'you mean?"

"I mean that we had *two traps* set for that catamount. There was strychnine enough in that quarter of mutton to kill twenty men!"

"What!" yelled Tim, dropping his cards, and leaping to his feet.

"*Strick*— Oh!" gasped Doll Smith, following suit.

"Pizen!" shrieked Eben Foltz, pale as a ghost. "Was that mutton pizened?"

"I tell you," said Abner, soberly, "there was strychnine enough in it to kill an army. The catamount won't have to eat much of it to settle his hash. If we don't find him you may; but, remember, the skin belongs to us."

And with that we went away, leaving four as sorry and ghastly-looking wretches as I ever beheld. They were absolutely dumb with terror, and we could hear their groans a long distance.

Toward evening Abner and Ben went over to the other camp again, and found it deserted; but under a pile of hemlock boughs, in a far corner, they found the remains of our quarter of mutton.

Toward evening on the next day Rich came up to find out what had happened. He told us that during the previous night Tim Young and his companions, apparently dead drunk, had been brought to his place on an ox-sled, and that when they got sober enough to speak, their first call was for a doctor.

"I sent for a doctor," pursued the old guide, "but from all I could learn I felt sure there had been a trick somewhere. The poor chaps thought they had been poisoned; and Doll Smith, said something about strychnine; but I fancied the worst poison they had taken had been Portland rum; so I left them for the doctor, and came up here to find out."

Of course, we told the story to Mr. Rich; and, of course, he told it to others; and that is the way that, in the Crooked River District, and in the circumjacent region, a sheep-stealer came, in time, to be called a *Welokenebacook Catamount.*

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DEC. 15, 1877.

We always stop the Ledger at the expiration of the year, or of the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue it, it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

The Great Family Paper.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1878.

The *Ledger* for the year to come will be conducted on the same principles as it has been heretofore—only, if possible, it will be made still better.

Our rule is to carry no dead weight, but to spread before our readers the newest and the best that money expended without stint will buy.

The *Ledger* has been too long established to require of us any specific promises for the future. We leave nothing in our power undone for the gratification and instruction of our subscribers.

Many of those who were children when they first began to read the *Ledger* now have children of their own, and some of them grand-children, who read their favorite paper. There could hardly be a stronger testimonial to the excellence of its character than is thus given to the *Ledger* by the regular renewal of these subscriptions.

Our great exertion for the coming year will be to make a volume that will be superior to the best of its predecessors.

The *Ledger* is always alive and fresh and full of interest.

The stories for the coming year will be by the most popular of our old writers and the best of the new writers who have occasionally contributed to our columns.

The miscellaneous articles by eminent scholars and divines will be continued: so will our accurate scientific department.

We shall reply, as heretofore, to the innumerable questions sent to us on love and domestic affairs, and every variety of subject.

Wherever the *Ledger* goes—and it goes nearly everywhere—it is generally conceded there is not a reader to whose happiness it does not minister.

Our subscribers will have no postage to pay. We prepay the postage on every paper that we mail.

OUR TERMS FOR 1878.—POSTAGE FREE.

Single copies, $3 per annum; four copies, $10, which is $2.50 a copy; eight copies, $20, *postage free.* The party who sends us $20 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free.* Postmasters and others who get up clubs, in their respective towns, can afterward add single copies at $2.50. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. When a draft or money-order can conveniently be sent, it will be preferred, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. Remember that the postage on the *Ledger* to all parts of the country will be paid by us, so that our subscribers will have no postage to pay.

☞ We employ no travelling agents. Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

Leaving Property in Trust.

It has become very customary in this country for a father who has children and has property, to leave his property in trust for his children. There are extreme cases in which such a course is the dictate of prudence, and is indeed essential for the preservation of the property to the uses of those for whose benefit it is intended; but generally the proceeding is adopted without sufficient cause. It often results from a selfish and mean feeling—an unwillingness that the wealth which the testator has accumulated should pass—so long as that can be prevented—into the absolute control of any other person. The property which the giver would fain take with him if he could—but can not—is given in such a way as to do the least possible good. It is hampered and tied up in every conceivable way. The full enjoyment of it is put off to the next generation.

It was a very interesting anecdote which Mr. Tilden related at a dinner party, a few evenings since, of Martin Van Buren. Mr. Van Buren sent for Mr. Tilden to consult him about a will which he had drawn up, creating certain complicated trusts. Mr. Tilden suggested that it was hardly worth while to try to be wiser than the law, and to trust grandchildren whom one did not know on account of distrust of children whom one did know. In consequence of this advice Mr. Van Buren wisely altered his will.

The meanness toward children sometimes extends far beyond depriving them of the inheritance which would be theirs under the law, and is carried to the extreme of placing upon enduring public records a father's displeasure toward his own offspring. An example of this occurred but a short time ago. A wealthy merchant of this city, who died abroad, not content with leaving only a pittance, and that in trust, to his son, was mean enough to incorporate in his will a catalogue of that son's supposed vices. If a rich father is not willing to leave a son his lawful share of the property he has accumulated, he might at least have the decency to take his departure without leaving behind him a shower of curses, rained down on that son's head. The memory of such an unnatural father and heartless man deserves to be execrated.

Trustees are apt to turn out incompetent or dishonest. It is seldom they take as good care of property as would be taken by those for whom they hold it. If you have anything to give it is almost always safer and better to give it directly to the person for whose benefit it is intended.

Who is to be Benefited by It?

Whoever ultimately wins in the sanguinary contest between Russia and Turkey, we cannot see how the world is to be greatly benefited by the result.

On the other hand, the bloodshed, the maiming, the slaying, the suffering of every kind—all the horrors of war—somebody is responsible for—responsible to public opinion and to God.

The selfishness of a few rulers and their unbridled ambition will have been gratified, on the one side or the other, at the expense of the many who are puppets in their hands.

May the day come when Equal Rights, Liberty and Peace may reign in all lands!

To Avoid Bankruptcy.

The list of bankrupts, voluntary and involuntary, in the daily papers, is constantly renewed. It is a list suggestive of unhappy experiences—of disappointment, of humiliation, and often of despair.

There is one certain, unfailing preventive of bankruptcy—and that is, *keep out of debt.*

One of the Drawbacks to Country Life.

It is a common complaint among people who amuse themselves in the country in raising choice poultry and fruit, as well as among those who follow the same pursuits for a living, that much of the satisfaction they would otherwise experience, is spoilt by the constant depredations of thieves. The pains taken may inure to the benefit of themselves, their friends or customers, or entirely to that of those who habitually reap where they have not sown. The utter uncertainty who is to have what is raised or grown, whether the owner or a robber, is one of the greatest drawbacks to country life at the present day. Whole families, known to all the neighborhood to be poultry thieves, are permitted to live on unmolested because no one individual will take the trouble to procure the requisite evidence against them and have them indicted, convicted and punished. In some instances, these petty thieves pursue their detestable occupation systematically, and travel a circuit of forty miles with a horse and wagon to pick up turkeys, chickens, ducks and geese. The losses experienced by individual owners are not generally pecuniarily large, but they are very annoying. A great deal more fruit and poultry would be raised if it were not for this great liability to have such things stolen.

We wonder that some combined plan for protection against these petty and provoking depredations is not hit upon by those who habitually suffer from them. In former times there existed in the New England and Middle States societies of mutual aid for the detection and punishment of horse and cattle thieves, and for the recovery of the stolen property. These voluntary associations proved of the greatest efficacy for the purposes for which they were designed. We know of no reason why similar societies could not be equally successful in putting a stop, or at least close limits, to the stealing of poultry and fruit.

Setting Snares.

There has been a good deal of what is called legislation for the protection of game, within a few years past. It consists, in an important degree, in the prohibition of the ensnaring of certain birds. They may be shot, but must not be snared. Eloquent members of the legislature have exhausted the English vocabulary in denouncing those who set snares and in praising those who shoot. The one constitute a class of detestable pot-hunters; the others are Nature's noblemen.

Now we are inclined to think that there are two sides to this, as there are to many other subjects. It is said the hunter gains health from his hunting excursions. But is his cheek more rosy than that of the farmer's boy, returning when the grass is still crisp with the hoar-frost which the sun's slanting rays have hardly begun to melt, from the inspection of his traps and snares?

"The "sportsman," we are loftily assured, "studies the habits of wild animals." Does he become better acquainted with them than the rustic youth who knows just where to place a twine or hair-slipping noose to find, a day or two later, the head of a rabbit or a partridge through it?

The disadvantage of the snarers and trappers—the boys—is, that their voices are not heard in the Legislature, and consequently the older "sportsmen," as they proudly denominate themselves, have everything their own way.

The Difficulties of Mr. Bergh's Men.

Officiousness, even in doing good, is hateful to the American nature. Mr. Bergh's men find this out in trying to prevent cruelty to animals. One of them in attempting to arrest the driver of a lame mule got severely whipped by the owner—experiencing in his own person a full measure of the cruelty from which he sought to save the quadruped.

It must be conceded that there is a good deal that has the appearance of being tyrannical in the conduct of some of the Bergh officers. A poor man crossing one of the ferries manifested great uneasiness lest the old horse he had to his wagon should be seized by Bergh's men and taken from him. The horse had a sore on his back, but it had been carefully dressed, and was not where the harness touched it. The work was good for the horse, and the poor man had a right to the profit of the beast's labor. Yet he informed us that, only a short time before, another horse, under precisely similar circumstances, had been forcibly taken away from him and shot. The loss he could ill afford to bear, and it is no wonder that such things exasperate people against even a seemingly benevolent enterprise.

It seems to us that it was much more cruel to shoot the poor horse than it was simply to work him with a sore on his back.

A Dangerous Habit.

Robert L. Case was convicted, a few days ago, of perjury, in swearing, as President of the Security Life Insurance Company, to a false report of the condition of that company.

His own excuse is that he swore to the report without ever having read it. He is an experienced business man, nearly seventy years of age, and certainly should have known better than to do such a thing—that is, accepting his excuse to be true.

Yet the practice of swearing to papers without knowing their contents is very common, even among ordinarily careful men. The experience of Mr. Case forcibly illustrates its danger.

At all events, if Mr. Case did swear falsely without knowing to what he swore, he was still properly convicted; for to swear to knowledge of a thing when one has none constitutes perjury.

Savage Conduct of a Teacher.

The *Columbus* (Ohio) *Herald* publishes the following account of the treatment inflicted upon a girl of thirteen by one of her teachers:

"She was frequently slapped in the face and told to say to her father that she was just as unruly and stubborn as he was, and had no right in the school anyway, as she had not complied with some petty regulation. After this very improper message the child returned to school, the question about the spelling was renewed, and the teacher then gave the girl a terrible beating, striking her seventeen times with a rubber ruler, and leaving her back marked and welted with the blows."

It seems incredible that such a person should be tolerated as a teacher anywhere.

An Untravelled Statesman.

It is stated that Mr. Gladstone, although he has been Premier of England, and now ranks among the very foremost statesmen of Great Britain, has never, until within a few weeks, set foot on Irish soil.

Our country is filled with men who saw the first day of their lives, what this illustrious gentleman had never seen until recently.

UNREPORTED TRAGEDIES.

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., N. Y.

New York was startled the other day by the details of a lamentable suicide. No fault could be found with the newspapers for reporting it, for the inquest necessarily involved publicity. A bride of only seven months, shocked and heart-broken by the discovery that her husband was a drunkard, and despairing, humiliated, and, perhaps, deranged in mind, she swallowed the fatal dose, and left the man who vowed to love and cherish her to the maudlin distress of an incapable inebriate.

This transaction is definite, clear-cut, and of easy comprehension. It impresses the imagination. It brings a whole history of deception, discovery, disgrace, and destruction within manageable compass. Any mind can take it in. Cause and effect lie near together. There is no indirectness, no remoteness. There is no struggle with poverty, no loss of friends, no change of circumstances—nothing but two lives blighted, the weaker becoming the speedy victim. And the feelings are enlisted. The bridal attire graces the funeral. The young face is calm and still in the sleep of death, whose kindly hand has blotted out the traces of repressed agony and unutterable despair. It is proper for you, kind-hearted reader, to use any strongest language you have in denouncing, in the phraseology of the platform, "the demon of drink," though it is not a demon at all, but a class of marketable compounds, beer, wine, gin, rum, brandy, from which men can only suffer when they take them in their hands, obey their appetites, and deliberately swallow them.

But suppose the broken-hearted bride to have been of a different temperament, to have braved the storm, to have waited until the other victim succumbed, or to have gone into the divorce court, or, degraded in her own eyes, to have sought the oblivion of woe that drugs can give, and become a drunkard herself, or, as some have done, gone down into the degradation that is nameless, would the tragic element have been less, or the just indignation lighter?

Here now, for example, is a handsome man of four-and-twenty, not uneducated and not poor. He says as to means he "can do anything he has a mind to." He is an incapable drunkard. His account of it is this: "My father drank a good deal, but not to be a slave to it. I was born with a liking to it. We all were. I never remember when I did not want something to excite me. Now, of course, I cannot do without it, and I guess it will always be so." And his mother, who, when she was widowed, hoped this boy would comfort her, is pale-faced, tremulous, broken-hearted. She has been so for years. She will not swallow morphine. She will weep and pine, and at last creep into her grave and end the tragedy of her life.

Here is Mrs. X., whose wedding made a holiday in the town where she grew up from childhood. Girls envied her, and men envied him as they walked together into the presence of a clergyman, and he solemnly vowed to be a "faithful and affectionate husband" to that happy and trusting woman by his side. Years pass and the poetry of life is somehow turning into prose. He is changed much. He says "the cares of business" account for it, and she tries to believe it—to believe that they keep him away so often, and render him moody and abrupt and unhappy with himself, and with every one. But when letters—cruel, undeniable, convincing letters—come to her, and insulting demands are made, and made by other and evil women, and she is humiliated, and stricken down, and moans in her bitterness, "I knew he was not affectionate, but I did not know he was not faithful"—and when she rises up from the fever which began in this way, and goes to work mechanically "for the sake of the children," is there no tragedy? Look at her in her home, or in church—she never goes into society—she never speaks of her misery. She never reproaches him; she hardly ever smiles. A good part of her nature is paralyzed. Sometimes she wishes she were dead—and where "the wicked cease from troubling," and she shudders to think that it is her husband that word brings to her thoughts. Oh! that long, monotonous tragedy of a crushed heart and a desolated home!

But let us turn in another direction. The gentler sex has no monopoly of misery. "What is the trouble with Mr. Y.?" his friends sometimes say. "His business is fair; his habits good; his connection excellent." His wife is his cross. "Is she too gay? Extravagant? Has she a temper?" No. "You don't mean to say—does she drink?" No. "Then what's the matter?" "Well, the fact is, she is a slave to opium. If she cannot get it in one form she will in another, and will sell her jewels, or her dresses, if necessary, to get it." And so Mr. Y., who thought he was marrying a companion, a friend, a help-meet, often comes to his house and leaves it again, when his wife is not able to speak to him. No wonder he is sometimes unaccountably dull and dejected. Men do not commonly look sunny in the rôle of life-long victim.

"The family of the Z.s have a curious history," says Lawyer G., who is too sensible a professional man to talk except where he knows to whom he is talking. "They were counted rich—were so, in fact—and still keep up some of the old appearances, but they are poorer than almost any one knows. The way of it is this: The eldest brother had no taste for business, and is naturally indolent and easy-going. So the property was left to the management of Richard—the second son. He made ducks and drakes of it—gambled, speculated, and defrauded them of every cent's worth that was moveable, and the worst of it is, he secured himself, or his wife, rather, from the consequent poverty on his breach of trust." "Why do they not prosecute him?" "Ah! there it is. They would not disgrace the name. Those girls might have been well-married, but they would not disclose the facts, and they could not in honor marry without disclosure. Would you believe it, those girls employ the accomplishments learnt at a boarding-school, at a thousand a year each, to earn the clothes they wear? And they will die so—noble women they are! but that scamp of a brother ruined them." The Z.s are no longer young. They have dropped out of the way of visiting. They are pale-faced, delicate, silent women, shrinking from observation, and unconsciously telling the story of their sorrow. Their foes have been of their own household.

Yes, there are many unchronicled heroes and heroines of tragedy—poor old King Lears, Cardinal Wolseys, fond husbands forsaken by fair Helens, victims of lust, fraud, lies, ambition, greed, gambling, on whom no coroner sits, and whom no reporter interviews. And he who ponders it all will be apt to think that the preachers cannot speak too strongly when they call misery the child of sin, when they denounce the beginnings of it, and "whatsoever tendeth thereunto." Parent and child—the harmless and the guilty—do suffer together. The selfish wrecker laughs and devours his spoil, and the innocent voyagers go down in the waves, and the great ocean the Creator made swallows them up, and chaos seems to reign again—a worse chaos than Ovid's, or Moses', when only the material world was "without form and void," and the whole of life is disordered forever—unless, indeed, as the preachers say, there is a Ruler who is patient because He is eternal, who, for sufficient reasons, defers judgment.

Buy a Cow.

The *Emmet County* (Michigan) *Democrat*, instead of advising young men, as Mr. Greeley did, to "go West," advises every one to "Buy a cow."

Well, the two things do not interfere with each other, and many a young man might do worse than to both go West and buy a cow.

The Deceitfulness of Riches.

The *Star in the West* pronounces riches deceitful. This is true; but, on the other hand, we apprehend our contemporary has not found poverty wholly reliable.

Now—this week, not next week—is the time to attend to the renewal of your subscription to the *Ledger*, and then you will not miss a single number. See our Prospectus.

PETTY ANNOYANCES.

BY BISHOP CLARK, OF RHODE ISLAND

The persistent attack of a swarm of flies on a hot summer afternoon will cause many a man to lose his temper, who would be as calm and serene as a marble statue in the presence of a dire calamity. The skin is the most sensitive part of the human body, and so the inner man, or soul, has an outward covering that is very susceptible to those little touches of impertinent fingers, which the philosopher may tell us are not worth regarding. I am inclined to believe that, upon the whole, we suffer more from the petty annoyances of life than from its more serious trials. A short time ago I wrote a very plain paper on "Things to be *remedied*." I now propose, in the same simple way, to give a sketch of "Things to be *avoided*." I shall state what they are without much comment.

I. *Untimely visits.* Calling upon people out of season, either at their place of business or at their homes, and taking up their time when they are occupied with their own affairs, is a thing to be avoided. Idle persons are apt to have too little consideration for those who are busy. Call upon business people, *on business*, in business hours, but not for a long, friendly chat on matters and things in general. Call upon your neighbors in their homes at such hours as they will probably be prepared to receive you, and not before they are down stairs in the morning, or while they are at dinner, or just as they are going to bed. In England to interfere with a gentleman at his dinner would be regarded as a high misdemeanor, if not as a crime, and it does not help the matter much to send in word that you will wait till dinner is over. One's digestion is not improved by the consciousness that there is a string of people in the next room, anxiously longing for you to come forth and listen perhaps to a tedious appeal in behalf of some stupid *cause.*

And once more, when you get up to go, it is well *to go*, and not keep your host standing at the door in a draft for half an hour, while you recapitulate and amplify and further illustrate and argue the point, of which he has already heard more than is agreeable.

II. *Impertinent interruptions.* It is not considerate to stop people in the streets, when it must be evident at a glance that they are in haste to catch the train or to keep an appointment or to get home after business hours, and button-hole them for ten or twenty minutes. Neither is it in good taste, when you see two persons engaged in earnest talk, to step in and enter upon miscellaneous conversation. A man possessed of ordinary instincts ought to know at once when his company is desired and when it is a nuisance. It is also a great impertinence to strike in with something entirely foreign to the subject, when one is in the midst of a story or a statement or an argument, and to persist in talking about "this, that, and every thing," to one who is trying to read the morning paper or a book or anything else. Whenever a man is so absorbed that he does not care to reply to what you say, it is time to stop talking.

III. *Unseemly requests*:—such as insisting that one shall contribute to an object for which he cares nothing, on the ground of his reputed wealth, or because other people have given,—indicating the precise amount which he is bound to bestow,—or asking for a specified *loan*, which both parties know will never be repaid, and therefore ought to be solicited as a charity,—and *crowding* the man when you cannot help seeing that he is strongly tempted to pitch you out of the door. The brazen way in which some people ask for autographs, photographs, recommendations, letters of introduction and the like, and without the slightest claim upon the person applied to, and even without any personal acquaintance, is stupendous; and the more absurd the demand, the more likely the applicant is to take offence, when he is refused.

IV. *Indirections.* This is a very mild word for expressing the sort of annoyance of which I am now to speak—as, for instance, the forwarding by mail, for a series of years, of a periodical to one who does not want it, but does not like to hurt the feelings of the editor by returning it, supposing it, of course, to be "*Complimentary*," and then receiving a bill of fifteen or twenty dollars, which the law obliges him to pay. There was a *theological* Quarterly published in New York a few years ago that kept its stupid head above water by such tricks as this,—I trust that it has gone down into the depths before this time. It is also an annoyance to receive a costly work from the writer or publisher, for which you have already declined to subscribe, with the delicate suggestion that you may either remit the price or accept the volume as a gift, which, of course, you will decline to do—preferring to pay fifty cents in postage to be rid of it. Neither is it altogether agreeable, after writing *gratuitously* for a periodical during a series of years, in order to help the thing on, to have a bill forwarded charging you from three to five dollars per annum for a work to which you never subscribed, but only *contributed.*

V. *Superfluous confidences.* There are some things one does not care to know, and it is a great annoyance to have a gossiping neighbor insist upon making you the depository of such unpalatable secrets, and then, perhaps, going on with a series of questions, intended to worm out of you an opinion which you are not disposed to give. It is equally annoying to have a person of this sort intimate that there is something which he might tell you that would greatly surprise and grieve you, but which he will for the present withhold out of regard to your feelings. It is also an annoyance, and an impertinence, to be questioned as to your views of a certain matter, it may be in the presence of the very people before whom you would be most unwilling to state your opinion. Boring an acquaintance, or even an intimate friend with perpetual talk about your own private affairs is a *superfluous* confidence.

VI. *Miscellaneous annoyances.* It is useless to think of cataloguing these, for their name is legion. Carelessness in keeping appointments; keeping other people waiting your own convenience; coming in late to church, or the concert, or the lecture, and always in creaking boots; delay in answering important letters; borrowing new books of the owner before he has had time to read them, and returning the same at a late date, perhaps never; scribbling foolish comments on the margin; always depending upon a neighbor for a sight of the Daily or Weekly paper, when you are as well able to pay for it as he is; learning to play on musical instruments in the full hearing of sensitive and nervous people; but we may as well stop here.

Some people are very annoying without seeming to be at all conscious of the fact; others appear to take a delight in tormenting their neighbors. The former may be cured by a little good counsel, while the latter are incorrigible. They may not be capable of committing a great crime, but they are the source of perpetual irritation, and like the autumn flies, to which I have already referred, they always light on the most sensitive parts. There are ways of keeping off disagreeable insects,—would that some specific might be found to keep off disagreeable people,—or to reform them.

Lucky Fright of a Horse.

We should not usually consider it a recommendation of a horse that he could easily be frightened. But in the instance related by the *Wyandot* (Ohio) *Times*, as follows, the fright of a horse was very fortunate:

"Last Wednesday evening John Yager came to Carey with his horse and buggy. About eight o'clock he started home. When he arrived at Dry Run Bridge he was confronted by a man who called out 'Halt!' Mr. Yager stopped his horse, and as he did so two other men approached from the roadside and went toward the horse's head. This alarmed Mr. Yager and scared his horse so that it ran away at great speed, much to the disappointment of the foot-pads, who fired at Mr. Yager, the ball passing through one of the curtains of the buggy and near his breast."

The Mistake of Some Women.

[From the Ashland (Ohio) Press.]

Some women think their charm is in their helplessness, but they will find mighty few men who are so idiotic as to agree with them.

NEDDIE'S PRAYERS.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

"Dear Cousin," a young mother whispered—
She had kissed her boy into his bed,
Wiped off the soiled shoes that betokened
A runaway's vagabond tread,
Taken briers, and queer ticks, and brambles,
From torn knickerbockers and shirt,
Had turned out a mole from a pocket,
And brushed his hat free from wood-dirt;

And now her fair face was in shadow
Far deeper than housekeeping cares
Could bring to it—"Cousin," she murmured,
"My Neddie won't think of his prayers!
When I tell him the sweet story over,
How His lambs the Good Shepherd will keep,
It's dreadful to have the boy tell me,
'Don't want to be four-legged sheep!'

"Just now, when I bade him say over
The prayer we all love, he went on
Just this way: 'Thy king— Did you ever
See bumble-bees fight a bird?—dom,'
And so on, all right to the ending.
Now what can I do with my Ned?
Will he ever give heed to my teachings,
And prayers ev'ry night by his bed?"

"Well, Cousin," I said, very softly,
"When Jesus his arms opened wide
To take in the children, I read not
That any were banished outside;
Not 'good little children,' remember,
But 'children may come unto me,'
He said, to the busy outsiders
Who bade them keep back from his knee.

"And don't He know better than you can
The heart of a boy through and through?
And isn't His robe fully ample
To cover such spots faint and few?
Ah dear! let the laddie remember
The mother-prayer over his bed,
And Jesus I'll trust to help over,
Though stumbling and erring the tread."

Let Them Hear It.

"I think my boy has a genius for music," said a mother, "but I never let him know I think so. I dread to see a child grow conceited. And Kitty is really pretty, you know, but I never let her guess we do not think her plain. I believe that to be my duty. We mustn't make young people think too much of themselves."

Now I doubt whether that mother was quite right; although, of course, when people, young or old, think too much of themselves they are very provoking; there is no doubt of that. A woman who obstinately will believe herself pretty and attractive is a constant aggravation to those dear friends of hers who desire that she shall think herself at least comparatively plain and unpleasing; while nothing is more unendurable to most men than another man who thinks himself peculiarly brilliant. But whatever one does, some one will be dissatisfied, and, in my humble opinion, it is better to think too much than too little of one's self.

The best gift a fairy godmother could give a child would be the power of being perfectly self-contented. As a general thing, those who really have much to be proud of are by no means the most entirely contented with themselves; but ah! how much happier is the dunce who thinks himself a genius than the genius who doubts his own powers; the ugly woman who believes herself a beauty than the beauty who thinks herself plain: and to be happy is so much!

I doubt if the old-fashioned style of refraining from all praise and never alluding to a beauty or a grace, while all faults of mind and person were pointed out and commented on, was a good thing. It made sensitive people too wretched.

For my part I should do everything I justly and reasonably could to make a boy satisfied with himself. I should teach a girl to dress becomingly, to be graceful, and to feel that there was no reason why love or admiration should not be hers. Many plain old maids are plain old maids simply because it was impressed upon their minds in early youth that they were hopelessly unattractive; and you and I have seen women set down as homely, who have suddenly brightened up and somehow made themselves handsome after the years when most people fade. A little hope had crept into their hearts with a word of compliment or a becoming dress, and changed their lives completely.

As for a man, he will never do anything until he thinks that he *can* do it. He will not make efforts that he fancies will be failures. Praise the boy for whatever he does well. Praise is so sweet, and to some it is the only incentive to effort. You have no hesitation in finding fault, and if blame is needed, don't restrain it; but if you have a word of praise to give, remember that it may lend its sunshine to all the years that are to come, and *let your children hear it*—not whisper it behind their backs. Mary Kyle Dallas.

Old Quaker Ladies.

Long ago, Charles Lamb quaintly commanded us to "love the Quakers." I am not sure that I love them all, but I certainly feel an impulse of affection whenever I see a placid old lady in a Quaker bonnet. The Quaker bonnet is not beautiful in an artistic sense. One does not wonder that the Society of Friends long ago concluded "not to insist upon the plain dress." The girls with spotless skins, and hair with reflections upon it such as one sees on their grandmother's satins, were not to blame for declining to hide their fair faces in the depths of a Quaker bonnet; but is there anything else that so softens and sweetens an old face? In it, the dear old lady looks like everybody's grandmother. And there are so many old ladies now-a-days who wear fly-away hats, with cabbage roses in them, and put violet powder on their noses, and "aurora" on their hair, that a real grandmother is a novelty.

Dear old Quaker ladies! I doubt not you have often wondered why I looked at you so lingeringly. You never guessed that I should have liked to kiss you, one and all, as you went placidly on your way to meeting through the streets of Philadelphia, with your gray-gloved hands crossed at your trim waists, and the lines of age softened into beauty marks by the shadow of your satin Quaker bonnets.

In New York you look even fairer and more gentle—as a dove might that had wandered into a land of paroquets—and there so much the more does my heart go out to you, blessed old Quaker ladies. M. K. D.

A Singular Obituary.

The *Clay County* (Kansas) *Dispatch* concludes an obituary notice of a young man in the following extraordinary terms:

"Young Frazell was respectably connected, being a son of Squire J. A. D. Frazell, of this ctiy. He has for some time past been considered a hard nut, but people who knew him and his family were inclined to look upon his unfortunate propensities as a disease from which he could not escape. His untimely death has been as great a shock to the community as if he had lived an exemplary life, and the deepest sympathy exists for his poor mother, who has been nearly crazed by the shock."

Coincidences—Wedding Day, Sunset, Death!

[From the Poughkeepsie Press.]

We are called upon to announce this morning the sudden death of the Hon. Chas. W. Swift, which occurred at his farm, a short distance south-east of the city, yesterday afternoon, just before five o'clock. It was the twenty-sixth anniversary of his wedding day, and he had been enjoying his usual health, and in good spirits during the day. In the afternoon, with his wife, he rode out to the farm, and on reaching there spoke to a man in attendance, giving some direction about fastening the horse, and then pointing to the west called his wife's attention to the fact that the sun was just setting. These were his last words. As he uttered them he jumped from the carriage, and sank instantly down and expired.

A Tall Woman—Only Two Left.

[From the Washington Correspondence of the Religious Herald.]

Last week, Miss Ellie, ninth daughter of Senator Withers, of Virginia, in her nineteenth year, was married to Mr. Putney, a wealthy Boston widower of fifty or more summers. The bride is nearly six feet tall, of remarkable beauty and intelligence, able to talk politics, quote John Stuart Mill, and ride an untamed horse. The marriage of a daughter of Senator Withers has long been a regular annual occurrence, but it cannot be kept up much longer; there remain only two unmarried.

MARRIED THIS MORNING.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

Married this morning—how charming that sounds—
How splendid it looks in the paper;
The bride wore white satin—how perfectly sweet,
And a vail like a soft silken vapor.
"No cards"—how exclusive that sounds, does it not?
"No cake"—they 're well up in the fashion;
And to prove to the world they are true millionaires,
"No presents received"—puts the dash on.

"Abroad for a long wedding tour"—that is nice!
We maidens do envy them truly;
We 're all in a flutter awaiting our turn,
For we can't for our lives take it coolly.
What letters the fair bride sends back to her friends,
I've read Arrabella's and Sadie's;
She writes that, just think of it, in the old world
They 're dining with lords and with ladies.

"Returned, Col. ——, with his beautiful bride,
From France,"—how the journals do laud her;
"Their elegant mansion thrown open to-day—
Receptions will now be in order."
True, true, what a *recherche* time it will be,
Her set will be truly delighted;
The grand double parlors will scarcely hold all,
Dear, dear, shall we girls be invited?

* * * * * * * *

"But two short years married and now a divorce!"
Law sakes, dear, who would 'nt have known it;
I thought from the first 'twas a very poor match,
But somehow I never *would* own it!
She 's no longer the bright shining star that she was,
The social horizon adorning;
Miranda, my love, here 's the paper just come,
Now tell me who 's married this morning.

A WOMAN SCORNED.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF "WHICH SHALL BE HEIR?" "A FATAL MISTAKE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FRUITLESS QUEST—GONE!—A HEROIC DEFENSE.

Agnes went back to her boarding-house in a state of doubt and depression which she could not shake off. As the hours wore slowly on the impression that her husband was in deadly peril of some kind deepened, in spite of her efforts to reason herself out of such vague fears. They clung to her, and rendered her so miserable that as the clock on her mantel rang out the hour of eleven, she took her hat and a light shawl, and rapidly arranging them, ran down stairs and knocked at the door of the landlady's apartment.

Mrs. Meadows had not retired to rest, and she opened the door herself to her late visitor. She was a kind-hearted, elderly woman, of methodical ways, and she exclaimed, in great surprise:

"Where have you been, at this late hour, by yourself, Mrs. Manvers, for I know your husband has not come in yet? Has anything happened? You are looking as pale as a ghost!"

"I have not been out, but I wish to go, and I came to see if you could find some one to accompany me. I am wretched about Mr. Manvers, and I must see what is detaining him so late at the warehouse. When I parted from him this evening he looked so ill that I was alarmed. I would not have left him if he had not insisted on it."

"Nonsense, my dear, your husband is quite able to take care of himself, and it is not so very late—only eleven—and for city hours that is early. If he is like most men he will not like having you run after him in this way. You had better go back to your own room and wait quietly till he comes in."

"I cannot do that," said Agnes, desperately. "I *know* that something dreadful is happening to Julian, and I *must* go to him. Has Mr. Kenton come in? If he has he will take me down town, I know."

"Well, yes, he is up stairs, but I hardly think it proper for a young woman like you to be going on such a wild-goose chase as this with a comparative stranger. Your husband won't like it, you may rely on it."

"Julian and Mr. Kenton are friends, and I know he is a gentleman. Leave me to explain to my husband, Mrs. Meadows, and please, *please* send some one up to ask Mr. Kenton to come down and speak with me."

The old lady saw how desperately in earnest she was, and she rang the bell at once for the boy who waited on her male boarders.

"Come in and sit down," she said, "for Jake is always asleep when he 's wanted at night, and it will take a few minutes for the cook to rouse him up and make him understand that he is to come to me."

Agnes sank on a chair in a fever of impatience and dread, for with each passing moment her fears deepened, and her whole frame was in a tremor of agitation. It seemed to her an age before the stupid negro lad made his appearance, and was sent on his errand. But she had not much longer to wait, for Mr. Kenton followed him immediately in response to his landlady's summons.

He came in looking cheerful and commonplace, and seemed greatly surprised to find Agnes awaiting his appearance. Before Mrs. Meadows could speak she started up, and said:

"It is I who wished to see you, Mr. Kenton. I am extremely uneasy about Mr. Manvers, for he is far from well, and I have a strong impression that he is too ill to get here without assistance. I can't tell you how or why it is, but I seem to *know* that he needs help. I must go to him, and I have sent for you to ask you to take me down town to him."

"Certainly—I will go with you at once, madam. I have noticed for several days past that Manvers was not looking well, or in spirits, but don't be alarmed on his account, Mrs. Manvers; such men as Julian overcome sickness rapidly, and even if your apprehensions prove true he will soon be all right again."

"God grant it," breathed Agnes, fervently. "Let us go at once, Mr. Kenton, for I feel as if there is no time to lose."

"I am quite ready, madam; my hat is in the hall and I will get it as we pass out."

"I will sit up for you, that I may laugh at your idle fears when you come in with your stray husband," said Mrs. Meadows, who utterly disapproved of the course Agnes had taken.

Excited and agitated as she was, the poor wife scarcely heard her, and made no reply. Once in the street, the two walked on rapidly to the nearest point from which a car could be taken, and when her companion attempted to talk with her she said:

"Please don't speak to me—I cannot listen—cannot think of anything but the awful dread that is upon me. Don't think me rude, Mr. Kenton, for I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your escort. I feel like one half demented by fear for Julian's safety, yet it seems foolish to think that anything more than illness can have detained him so late."

Kenton comprehended the state of her mind, and thought her very silly to work herself into a nervous paroxysm because her husband did not return as soon as she expected him. But he admired her sincerely, and wished that he had such a tender simpleton himself to watch for his coming. He gallantly said:

"I know that you are incapable of intentional rudeness, Mrs. Manvers, so I will make no further attempt to convince you that your fears concerning Julian are groundless."

They had to wait five minutes on the corner for the approach of a car, and poor Agnes felt as if each moment was an hour. But one came at last, and ten minutes later they got out at the point nearest to their place of destination.

A few squares were hurriedly passed over, and the two stood in front of the tall, dark house in which no living creature seemed present. Agnes hurriedly said:

"We will go up the alley and knock at the door of the counting-room. Julian is there, I know."

As they entered the narrow passway, the carriage containing her insensible husband passed out of it at the farther end, and if they had reached the place five minutes sooner the well-laid plans of Markley would have been baffled.

"All is as dark here as in front," said Kenton. "No one can be in the counting-room. Manvers has gone home and we have missed him. All we can do is to return as quickly as possible."

"The window-shutter has not been closed," said Agnes, in eager tones. "Julian would never leave the place till he secured that. He must be in there in the darkness, Mr. Kenton."

They approached the window, looked in, but could see nothing. Agnes called softly, but no answer came, and after a pause, she said:

"I believe you are right. He must have gone up town while we were coming down. Let us go back as quickly as possible. I could not help coming, but it was silly to do so; I see it now."

As they passed the door returning, Agnes paused a moment and shook the lock, again calling on the name of her husband, and with a sigh almost of relief she turned away, saying:

"Julian will scold me for making such a jaunt as this, but I shall not care if I find him safe when I get back."

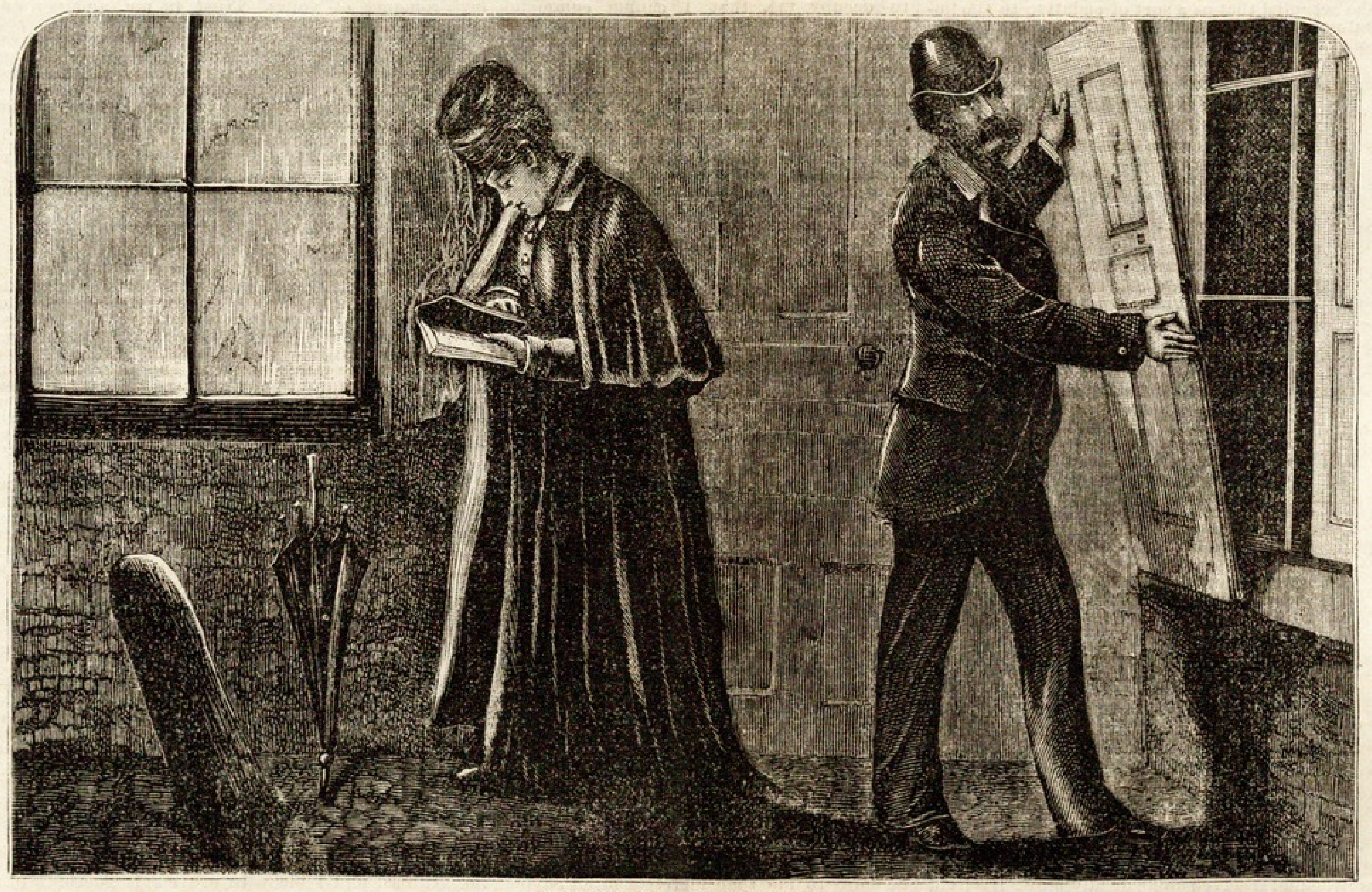
As she stepped forward her foot came in contact with a small book which lay within a few inches of the wall. Stooping mechanically she picked it up, and by the faint light that penetrated to the alley saw that it was a thin leather-covered pamphlet, such as are used by merchants for dotting down memoranda. She said:

"Julian must have come out by that door and dropped this on his way. It is lucky, after all, that I came hither to find and take it back to him."

Before going on with her Kenton closed the heavy wooden shutter over the window which fastened with a spring, marvelling within himself at the carelessness of his friend in leaving it open.

They took an omnibus on their return and went up Broadway which was still full of life and motion. But Agnes had no thought for anything but her husband, and the scene which, at another time, would have interested her, passed by her now almost without notice. Getting out at the corner, they walked on half a square to Mrs. Meadows's house, and found that lady watching for their return at the door.

"Is Mr. Manvers here?" asked Agnes, breathlessly, as she ran up the steps. "We have missed him, and he must be at home by this time."



AGNES FINDS THE NOTE-BOOK.

"Then you did not find him?" said the landlady, bewildered. "He has not come in, for I've been watching for him ever since you left."

Agnes sank down on one of the hall chairs almost in a fainting condition.

"Not here?" she gasped. "Then where on earth can he be? He was not in the counting-house, unless—unless he was lying there incapable of answering me when I called to him."

"He could not have been there, Mrs. Manvers," said Kenton, "because the place was dark, and if Manvers had been seized with illness, as you fear, he would hardly have turned the gas off. The book he dropped coming out proves, too, that he must have left the place. Calm yourself, dear madam; he has only stopped on the way to take refreshment, of which he must have been greatly in need, for he has not been in either to dinner or supper to-day."

Agnes tried to accept this consolation, but in her foreboding heart she felt all its futility. She arose with effort, and said:

"I believe I will go to my room and wait. But if he does not come, what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

Touched by the deep anguish in her voice, Kenton said:

"I will go down town to the place I know he always stops at when he lunches; the house is not closed yet, and I am sure I shall find him there, or meet him as I walk down Broadway."

"Oh, if you will do that! If you will only bring him back safe to me, I will thank and bless you forever! You are tired, I know, and it is selfish in me to accept your kind offer, but I am so wretched—so certain that something is wrong."

"Oh, I am as fresh as flowers in June, and glad to walk for I have been sitting at my desk all day. I will be back with good news before long," and the kindly-natured young man hastened down the steps and took his way toward Broadway.

Mrs. Meadows began to feel a little uneasy herself, but she tried to console Agnes, and went with her to her room, uttering such platitudes as drove her so nearly to distraction that she at length insisted that she must be left alone, and that Mrs. Meadows herself needed repose.

In her anguish and bewilderment, Agnes, when left to herself, paced the floor for hours. The book she had picked up in the alley was forgotten, and when it fell from her pocket at her feet, she mechanically took it up and thrust it into a private drawer in her desk with the vague consciousness that it was too important to be trusted to any place less safe than that.

Afterward, when she tried to recall what she had done with it, she could not remember having put it into the desk at all, and as the drawer had never been used by her for any purpose, it did not occur to her to look into it, anxious as she was to recover this possible clew to the fate of her husband.

We pass over the anguish of that night—no pen could do justice to the suffering of the hapless wife bereaved of the idol of her life in the first flush of their wedded happiness. And what she knew must follow his disappearance was almost as hard to bear as the misery of knowing that he was lost to her.

Kenton spent the greater part of the night in his fruitless efforts to trace his friend; he then called at the headquarters of the police, and employed a detective to continue the search for the missing man, and went home to report his failure to Agnes, and try to get a few hours' sleep before going to his business in the morning.

Two letters came for Agnes the next day. One from her uncle announcing his return to Selwood, and claiming her promise to join him there; the other from Mrs. Tardy, giving her an account of her slow progress toward recovery, and describing the life she led at Kirkwood.

It was ten o'clock before these reached her, and the detective had made his report to Kenton, which was duly transferred to the anxious wife. No clew had been found to the disappearance of Manvers. Kenton had gone as usual to the warehouse, and let himself in with his pass key. The detective had visited the place soon after, and together they had made a thorough investigation, but found nothing to indicate a struggle, or even a hurried departure on the part of Manvers. Everything was in order in the counting-room, and the key of the desk was missing.

From these indications, the two men came to the conclusion that there had been no foul play, and that if Manvers could not be traced, he had voluntarily disappeared. Kenton remembered the words of Manvers on the previous day, and it seemed to him now that but one interpretation could be put upon them. Aware of the ruin that was approaching, he had possessed himself of such funds as were accessible, and fled.

Reluctant as he was to come to this conclusion, for he had liked and esteemed the missing man, he could find no other solution to the state of things, if all efforts to discover Manvers's whereabouts failed.

The house was closed, and a policeman put in charge of it till the return of Markley, who might be absent a week, or possibly longer, as it was stated that he had gone to Virginia to visit his brother who lay at the point of death.

When the report of failure to find a clew to her husband's disappearance was made to Agnes, she said, with white lips:

"Mr. Manvers is as incapable of baseness, as I am of believing that he would desert his post; that he would desert *me* in this clandestine manner. If he cannot be found, he has been foully dealt with. But it is too early yet to despair. Employ other men, Mr. Kenton—spare no expense to discover what has become of him. I have money of my own, and I would sooner spend every cent I have in the world, than not find out the secret of last night's villainy. Julian may be dead, but his name shall not be covered with obloquy, if I can prevent it."

"You are right, Mrs. Manvers, and I will help you as far as I can. A more honorable man than your husband never lived, and I can bear testimony to his many good and noble qualities," replied Kenton, with emotion.

"You have more courage than I thought, and with friends to back you, we shall yet discover the truth concerning this perplexing affair. I will take the measures you suggest, and come again this evening to let you know how we progress."

"Thank you: but do not neglect your own affairs to attend to mine. Employ the police, and leave the search to them. I have friends to stand by me, thank Heaven! and if you will send a telegram which I have written to my uncle, as you go down town, I shall be greatly obliged."

Kenton eagerly assented, and she gave him a strip of paper on which she had written:

"Come to me at once. I need your assistance."

This was properly addressed, and in response to it the professor came up that afternoon in a state of extreme uneasiness as to what could possibly have happened.

But the truth went far beyond his wildest apprehensions, and the poor old gentleman wept some of the bitterest tears he had ever shed over the wreck of the happiness he had so lately exulted in.

Agnes confided to him all Manvers had told her of the state in which he had found the affairs of the firm when he was left to manage the business alone, and both believed with certainty that if anything fatal had happened to Julian, his fellow-partner was to be held responsible for it, and that Markley had acted as his agent. But how to bring it home to them was the question. Brenton's cunning had doubtless prepared every step to the catastrophe of the previous night, and no traces would be left behind to criminate himself.

The absence of Markley at this especial crisis added to their suspicions, for the professor and his niece were both aware that Manvers had no belief in his honesty, nor in his good feeling toward himself.

But the excuse given for his sudden journey seemed plausible, and both hesitated to accuse him at once of being the agent through whom Brenton's schemes were carried out. They must wait and see what the next few days might develop before taking any steps toward inculpating Markley. Manvers might be found, or come back of himself, and explain his mysterious absence.

Agnes kept up her courage she hardly knew how, but she felt that this was no time to give up. She must sustain herself for Julian's sake, and defend him to the bitter end if he did not appear to defend himself. She forced herself to take food enough to sustain her strength, though it was tasteless and loathsome to her in her present excited and wretched state of mind.

She entreated her uncle not to write and alarm Mrs. Tardy till all efforts had failed to gain any tidings of Manvers, forgetful that the daily papers penetrated to every nook in the country, and that an item about such a matter would be copied in every journal in the land.

The evening papers on that day had on their front pages in large letters, "Mysterious disappearance of one of our most promising young merchants." Beneath this was an account of what was known to the police, and various editorial comments on the disappearance of Manvers. One said:

"This young firm promised to be brilliantly successful, but since the departure of the eldest partner for Europe, it has gone down so swiftly and suddenly that one hardly knows what to think of the managing capacity of the one left in charge of the business. We give no names, and suspend our judgment till something further is known."

Another said:

"A man is missing from his usual place, and whispers are rife of fraud, embezzlement, and flight to foreign shores. We will say this much, though, in defence of the one accused: if *he* could be guilty of such baseness, never again will we trust any human creature; for he seemed the very soul of truth and honor."

The journal containing the last notice the professor purchased and took up to Agnes, and she wept thankful tears that amid the general condemnation which she felt certain awaited her husband, at least one voice was raised to speak justly of him. On the following morning an advertisement appeared in that paper offering a reward of a thousand dollars for any news of Julian Manvers, who was believed to have been foully dealt with after he left his counting-room on the night of September 19th.

The days passed and nothing was discovered. Agnes gave up all hope of ever seeing her husband again, and how she lived on through those terrible days was afterward a source of astonishment to her. Hope did not sustain her, for she lost all hope after the first failure to discover what had become of Manvers. That he was lost to her forever she firmly believed, but she felt that the duty of defending him from the charge of fraud and flight was hers, and as far as her feeble power went she was ready to give the last remnant of her life, if it was necessary, to rescue his name from obloquy.

A meeting of the creditors was called, but nothing could be done till Markley's return. No telegram could be sent to him, because no one who knew him could tell exactly where his brother lived, so a week rolled away before the affairs of Brenton and Manvers could be looked into. At the end of that time Markley came back in fine spirits, asserting that his brother was recovering and would soon be about again. He affected to be greatly shocked when told of the disappearance of Manvers, but shook his head and said he never had much faith in him, and things had gone on very queerly from the time of Brenton's departure.

Markley had been confidential clerk, and he knew everything about the business that could now be told. He called on each creditor and talked with him in private before the general meeting took place, and the consequence was that there was a strong feeling of prejudice against the absent man when they came together in the counting-room to ascertain what chance there was to have their different claims settled.

It was soon ascertained that there were no assets—the books had disappeared, and also every paper that could connect the name of Brenton with the disasters of the firm. Markley had made good use of his opportunities since his return, for he had been allowed to take entire control of the house, and he even slept there at night.

The result of the examination was that Julian Manvers was believed by nearly all of the creditors to have embezzled a hundred thousand dollars, and made good his escape to some foreign land where he could live in luxury on the fruits of his crime.

This decision had scarcely been arrived at, when two persons appeared on the scene whose presence had not been anticipated or prepared for. Mrs. Manvers came in, leaning on the arm of her venerable uncle, both looking worn and weary, but full of confidence in the man who had just been adjudged guilty, with scarcely a voice raised to speak a word in his defense.

Agnes looked like a marble woman, so white, so calm in her great despair, that even the heart of Markley felt a movement of pity when he looked on her. She was dressed in deep mourning, and that added to the pallor of her complexion.

Not more than seven gentlemen were present, and they huddled together in a confused group, wondering why the wife of the condemned man had come among them. Chairs were offered to the two who were looked on as unwelcome intruders. The professor waved his away, and stood leaning on the back of the one into which his niece sank, feeling incapable of sustaining herself under the ordeal she had herself insisted on passing through for the sake of the man she loved.

One of the directors of the bank which had been swindled of so large a sum frowned heavily, and said:

"Madam, it was unwise in you to come hither to-day. You will only hear what must wound you deeply; however guilty your husband may be, we have no wish to denounce him before you."

Summoning all her courage, Agnes replied in low, sweet tones, that did not falter:

"It is because I know he is not guilty that I am here to say that which no one else will say for him. If you have been cheated of your just dues, it was not through the agency of Julian Manvers, but through the utter baseness of his partner, aided by that man I see among you. If Mr. Markley would speak the truth, he would tell you that the failure of this house was arranged for before my husband was left to its sole management. He—"

Markley made an effort to interrupt her, but Professor Tardy sternly silenced him by saying:

"My niece came hither to defend her husband, and she shall be heard without any interruption from you, sir. It is as little as these gentlemen can do to listen to what she has to say, and require you to do the same."

Markley scowled on him, and seemed determined to speak, but one of the gentlemen laid his hand on his shoulder, and said:

"If Mrs. Manvers has anything to say, whether important or not, it is but courtesy to allow her to be heard."

In the same slow, quiet manner Agnes went on:

"I have much to say that I think is of the last importance to the memory of the man who is gone, who I know has been so basely traduced in your hearing to-day. Mr. Manvers told me, before he so strangely disappeared, that large sums of money which had passed through Mr. Brenton's hands could not be accounted for; and from the condition of the books and papers left behind him, he was constrained to believe that his partner had appropriated them, and left him to bear the burden of those heavy losses, knowing that failure must be the inevitable result. I urged him to call you together, gentlemen, and show you what he had discovered, that he might save himself from the charge of complicity with Mr. Brenton, and he finally told me that he thought the advice good, and would act on it. He spent the whole of that last day in preparing for the exposure he intended making on the following one; and that night, while still at his work, he was either murdered or spirited away by some agent of Mr. Brenton's, and in spite of the alleged absence of Mr. Markley, I believe he was that agent."

Markley uttered a coarse oath, and striding forward, said:

"You attack me, madam, in this shameless manner without having the slightest proof to sustain your accusation. I left this city that morning, as can easily be ascertained by any one who wishes to follow my steps. I have been absent a week, and I come back to find that Julian Manvers has consummated the villainy he planned as soon as Mr. Brenton's eye was removed from him, by running off with all the available funds of the house. Your precious husband is a scoundrel and swindler, madam, and in place of having been made way with by me, he is now on the high seas with his booty, seeking some place of safety for himself. But this Government has long arms, and he may be reached yet."

"Let him be sought for then in every land beneath the sun," replied Agnes, with the same impenetrable calmness. "Would to God the protecting arms of justice could enfold him, and then he would be rescued from your power. Mr. Markley, I denounce you as the accomplice of Mr. Brenton in all his villainy, and I feel the conviction that you will both yet be found out and punished as you deserve. My poor Julian has been your joint victim, and it is to screen yourselves that he has been made to disappear—that this atrocious charge of embezzlement may be brought against him instead of those who have really accomplished it. If an angel from Heaven could come down to assure me that my husband is innocent, I could not believe it more implicitly than I do now. He, the soul of honor—fastidious in his ideas of right and wrong—*he* capable of committing a gigantic fraud! Impossible! impossible!"

She sank back exhausted by the effort to speak so long, and Markley, looking her clearly in her face, cynically said:

"You must be mad to bring such a charge against me. If I knew where your husband is to be found I would drag him myself to the bar of justice. He has destroyed as promising a business as a man need desire, and in his greed for money has ruined himself, and impoverished his too confiding partner. As to your charges against myself, I can afford to disregard them, as they can be easily disproved, and none of these gentlemen here will attach any importance to them except your uncle, who, of course, will stand by you, since he brought you here to make this absurd accusation."

"Yes, sir," said the professor, with sudden fire, "I stand by my niece, and I endorse all she has said. I know it to be *impossible* for Julian Manvers to commit a mean action, and his disappearance has been the result of a base plot against him which has been carried out through Mr. Brenton's agent or agents since he sailed for Europe. Who is so likely as yourself to have been employed by him in this work? Manvers objected to you as an employé of the firm, and was overruled by his partner for purposes best known to you and him. I *shall* follow your steps from the time you say you left this city till your return. I will set detectives on your track, and it is my firm belief that in the end this stupendous piece of villainy will be exposed in all its blackness, and you and your accomplices be brought to answer for this crime of which I accuse you—abduction or murder, and the embezzlement of the money you accuse Julian Manvers of having appropriated."

"Well done, parson," said Markley, with a sneer. "I have listened to your preaching to the end, which is saying a great deal for my patience. You go it strong, but I can stand it; follow me up, if you choose, and spend your money for nothing. I am as safe as a church, as the saying is, and I defy you to discover anything against me. By this time, Julian Manvers is in Cuba, or South America, with his ill-got gains, and I assure you, that for ten times their amount, I would not burden my conscience with the murder of any creature. If he does not die till I kill him, Manvers may live as long as the Wandering Jew."

Agnes leaned forward with clasped hands and parted lips, as he uttered the last words. A faint pink tinge came into her pallid cheeks, and she said:

"Then my husband is living, and I shall find him again. You were too cowardly to tamper with his life, though you are trying to take from him what, to him, is far more precious—his good name. You have uttered many falsehoods this morning, Mr. Markley, but I feel that one grain of truth has at last been winnowed from the chaff. You did not dare to kill my Julian, and he will yet appear to confront you, and bring home to you the wickedness of which I accuse you."

Markley changed color more than once while she spoke thus, but with an assumption of indifference he said:

"Let him come on as soon as he will, madam. I shall be ready to meet him, and challenge him to produce any evidence against me. Zounds! how long am I to be badgered in this way by a half-demented woman?"

"You will find that there is method in my madness," said Agnes, rising, and taking the arm of her uncle. Then turning her sad face toward the group who had listened with absorbing interest to what had been said: "I came hither, gentlemen, to enter my protest against the condemnation of Mr. Manvers on such evidence as is now accessible to you, and I entreat that you will suspend your judgment till something more reliable is known than the statements made in the interest of his employer by that man, who has spoken so coarsely and rudely to me. Mr. Brenton is alone accountable for the losses you have sustained, and if Julian Manvers is still in the world, I feel the conviction that he will reappear in time to convict him and his ally of their complicity in crime."

The dignity of her manner, the pathos in her tones, deeply touched those to whom she appealed, and almost with one voice they assured her that they understood and appreciated her motive for appearing before them; one, more impulsive than the others, exclaimed:

"It is impossible to believe that Manvers could desert such a woman as you are, madam, and I, for one, withhold my judgment."

"Thank you, sir," she replied, with a faint smile. "It will only be just to do so. No breath of suspicion has ever tainted the fair fame of Mr. Manvers till now, and it will surely be most unfair to condemn him on the testimony of his enemy. Be just, be generous till he can come forward to speak for himself."

Moved by her devotion to her husband, their losses were for the moment forgotten, and assurances were given her that time for thorough investigation should be granted before condemnation was passed on the one who was so dear to her heart.

Aroused by this from the stern control she had put upon her feelings to enable her to pass through this scene without breaking down, color came back to her cheeks and lips, tears arose to her eyes, and with all her native impulsiveness she raised her hand and said:

"As God hears me, I believe that my husband is innocent, even in thought, of such baseness as has been imputed to him, and with Heaven's help I will yet find him, and bring him to thank you in person for the assurance you have just given me."

With a graceful motion of her hand she bade them farewell, and went out with her uncle.

"That's a woman worth talking of!" exclaimed one; but Markley said, with a sneer:

"It was all done for effect; *she* knows that her tirade against me is all bosh, and it was only intended to gain time. I would not be surprised if she knows where Manvers is hiding, and intends to join him as soon as she dares to do so."

"Such is not my opinion," said the bank director, gravely. "A woman like that is as incapable of dishonesty as she evidently believes her husband to be."

CHAPTER XXIV.

KIRKWOOD—MRS. TARDY IMPATIENT.

Agnes had made a great effort to appear thus in defense of her husband, but she felt it a sacred duty on her part to do all that was possible to shield him from condemnation while he was unable to speak for himself.

She left her room to go on this painful errand with scarcely a hope that she should ever behold Manvers again on earth; she came back to it with the conviction in her own mind that his life was still safe, and her heart grew lighter with the new hope that had been infused into it by the words of Markley. *Why* she should so implicitly believe that assertion, when she stigmatized as utterly false everything else he had stated, she could not explain to herself; the conviction was in her mind that Manvers was yet living, and if living, then he must be found—must be produced in time to answer to the charges brought against him, and overwhelm his enemies with confusion.

All her energy came back; she wept no more, and the marble paleness of her complexion changed to its natural hue. For a few days she had been like one paralyzed by the force of the blow that had fallen on her, but with the new hope which had sprung to life in her heart, she regained her elasticity, and was ready for the struggle in which she at once engaged. A shrewd detective was employed to discover if Markley actually set out for Virginia on the nineteenth of September, and if he had a brother in that State to whom a visit had been made.

The report made on the return of the detective was, that Markley was seen on the day train; that he had a ticket for Fredericksburg in Virginia, and from there, he had casually stated to the conductor, that he would leave the train and go into the mountains to visit his sick brother. The conductor thought he went on to his destination, but could not say that he noticed him again.

No further trace could be found of him till the detective reached Fredericksburg; then he ascertained that Markley had been in the town a few days before on his *return* from the visit he had made to his brother. On inquiry he found that this brother was a sort of outlaw, who had committed murder in a moment of passion many years before, and since then had been allowed to live unmolested in a wild mountain pass with no associate save his dog. As he was believed to be unsound in mind, no notice was taken of him, or any attempt made to arrest him, though the crime he had committed was well known to the few persons who lived near enough to him to be called neighbors.

The detective went on to Christopher Markley's cabin, making a long and fatiguing journey to the desolate place. He found the owner at home, and his thin person and sallow complexion seemed to confirm his assertion that he had lately been ill, and in consequence had summoned his brother to visit him.

The cabin consisted of two rooms, a large one in front and a smaller one in the rear used as a store-house in which he kept his wood and provisions. When Kit understood why the detective had visited him he seemed surprised, and with the utmost apparent simplicity invited him to inspect every part of the house and judge if he could have any one concealed in it.

The inspection was made, and nothing was found in the front room but a rude bedstead built against the wall, a large chair of home manufacture, a rough table, a tin lamp, and a few books, among which was found a Bible and a prayer book.

The smaller division was almost filled with wood for the winter which was piled up nearly to the roof, and there seemed to be no outlet from it. Nothing suspicious was visible, and the visitor left the place no wiser than when he entered it. All his enquiries were fully answered, and with sufficient intelligence, though the man sometimes had a vague, wandering look which led his questioner to believe that the assertions of the country people were true; that remorse for the fatal act he had committed had dazed his mind, if it had not quite crazed him.

When the professor heard this statement he was disheartened. Wearied of the din and turmoil of a large city he proposed to Agnes to return to Selwood and leave the case in the hands of the detectives. If anything was discovered a telegram could be sent, and in a few hours they could return to New York. Agnes was reluctant to go, but she saw that her uncle's health suffered from city air, and that he was wretched away from his usual employments. His mind, having nothing to occupy it, dwelt despondently on the chances in favor of the discovery of Julian Manvers's place of seclusion, if he was still living; so the poor, tortured wife thought it her duty to go with him, even if she suffered more deeply herself in leaving the place in which her most absorbing interest in life was now centered.

They returned to Selwood, and a dead blankness fell over the life of Agnes, though she exerted herself to be a companion to her uncle, and to keep up his spirits in the absence of the wife on whom he was so dependent for comfort and happiness.

She was *waiting*, for she felt the certainty in her own mind that her fervent prayers for help would be answered by the salvation of her husband. She cast her burden at the feet of Him who alone could help her in this dire crisis of her life, and gained strength and endurance from repeating to herself the many promises scattered through the Bible to those who can place entire trust in the all-embracing love of God for the helpless and suffering beings He has created.

But for this faith she must have died under the strain on brain and heart in those dark days when nothing happened and hope seemed fainting within her.

Of all the trials of earth could any be more dark and bitter than this one she was called to pass through? Her bridegroom torn from her in this fearful and mysterious manner; his honor impugned—his life possibly unsafe with those who had spirited him away; it was a heavy load for those young shoulders to bear, but Agnes bore up under it bravely, and sustained her courage to a degree that was marvellous to her uncle.

In the meantime what was happening at Kirkwood? The place was situated among the Maryland hills, in a wildly picturesque region, near enough to the bay to feel the influence of the salt sea breezes which swept over it, though many miles lay between the old homestead and the gleaming waters. The house, an old-fashioned, many-gabled building, erected nearly a century ago, was still solid and strong as ever. Its thick walls of stone dug from the hill-side, and cemented together so skillfully that they might stand for ages to come, were covered from foundation to chimney-top with a thick growth of ivy, which, at a distance, gave it the appearance of a picturesque ruin.

But on a nearer approach it was seen to be a substantial, well kept home, with gardens, orchard, and well-tilled fields surrounding it. Kirke could with truth say, "I am monarch of all I survey," when he stood on the portico in front of his house and looked around the valley enclosed by hills which girded it entirely in. His domain consisted of two thousand acres, a few hundreds of which were in cultivation. Sheep were kept on the hillsides nearest the home place, but the remainder was almost a wilderness, with here and there a tenant who lived in a log cabin and cleared a few acres around it.

It was a solitary place, with few neighbors, but those that were accessible were cultivated people, who kept up with the times and visited Baltimore at least once a year to see what was going on in the outside world.

The interior of the house was paneled with oak, which had darkened with age almost to the hue of ebony, and in the wide hall there was a winding staircase quite as venerable in appearance as the walls. The furniture was old-fashioned, but in excellent preservation, and everything was kept in scrupulous order by the elderly mulatto who had been housekeeper at Kirkwood ever since its present owner could remember the place.

Mrs. Tardy's health had been materially though slowly benefited by her stay there, and she now sat in the hall in a large chair, occupying her restless fingers with knitting. The employment was not particularly congenial to her, but anything was better than idleness, she averred, so she accepted that as a sort of sedative to the impatience which often filled her heart at the uselessness of her present life.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE SWEETEST DAY.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

There came a day, a blessed day,
So full of sweetness and delight,
Its affluence was blown away
Across the misty walls of night.

Somehow the world seemed wondrous fair,
A glory brighten'd in the skies,
And oh, to breathe the enchanted air,
Was like a dream of paradise!

There fell a shadow o'er the scene,
The light was quenched, the glory fled;
I sighed and said with anguish keen,
"The sweetness of the day is dead!"

The heart takes up its song again,
In minor key the accents fell;
But after bitter grief and pain,
'Tis well if hearts can sing at all.

And as I climb life's rugged hill,
Whate'er of comfort I may lack,
I'll draw from memory's store, until
Youth sheds its brightness o'er my track.

And blown across December's snow
Come breezes fragrant of the May,
That whisper tenderly and low
Of that one well-remembered day.

For moments that expand in joy,
And scatter roses at our feet,
Time has no power to destroy
Until our hearts have ceased to beat.

FOUND GUILTY;

OR, THE

Marquis's Vindication.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONFIDENCES.

The proposition of Lady Vivian took Lord Mountheron completely by surprise. He looked as if he had received some deadly blow. His livid countenance, his eyes full of horror, his swift recoil, all declared that Lady Vivian's word had given him a terrible shock. He looked from her to the sea, but his eyes beheld neither the shimmering waters nor the white sails upon them. Lady Vivian kept her eager, dusk eyes fixed upon him in a breathless anxiety and suspense.

"This is madness, Vivian," he said at last, huskily. "I believed myself upon the threshold of success, and here you place an obstacle between us which is insurmountable. It is absolute madness to think of clearing the name of Lord Stratford Heron!"

"Why so?" asked Lady Vivian, trying to speak calmly.

"Because that name is so covered with infamy that no power under heaven can clear it!" declared the marquis.

"But I tell you he was innocent. Truth will come to the surface; his innocence can be proved, if only some one like you would devote his energies to the task," urged Lady Vivian.

"No one but you believes him innocent. Pardon me, dear Vivian, but I must tell you, the truth," said Lord Mountheron, with extreme gentleness, turning his pale visage toward her. "You force the truth from me. No one in all England, of all who knew him best, believes Lord Stratford Heron innocent of his brother's murder. He was tried by a jury of his peers, found guilty of fratricide, and condemned to die—"

"But men have been found guilty before him of crimes they never committed," persisted Lady Vivian, "and innocent men have been hanged!"

"Vivian, I never dreamed that you cherished such mad ideas, such insane delusion," cried the marquis, wiping his forehead. "Your judgment is biased. Think of the testimony against him. He *was* guilty—"

"I say that he was not!" interrupted Lady Vivian, with passionate emphasis.

"Have you any proof of his innocence?"

"Proof? No. If I had, do you not suppose that I would have gone with it to the very throne and demanded justice? Proof? No, I have no proof, and yet I know that he was innocent. I know that he was incapable of wrong-doing. You tell me that you love me, Rowland. Stratford was your kinsman: help me to clear his name, and I will give you gratitude, and—and affection."

The marquis appeared to debate within himself. He was silent for some time: then he said quietly:

"I do not like to favor your strange delusion, Vivian, but I would do anything to win you. You are suffering an hallucination. Stratford was guilty. So many years have passed that you have forgotten much of the evidence. Possibly you never read it all. I will go over the whole case, sift the testimony sentence by sentence, and prove to you Stratford's guilt. If I convince you of that will you not consent to marry me?"

Lady Vivian did not immediately reply. The proposition seemed to her monstrous. He repeated the question.

"I was about to say no," she answered at last. "For if I were to be convinced of Stratford's guilt I would never trust any human being again. Believe him, the noblest, the purest, the grandest soul I ever knew, guilty of a foul, unnatural and awful crime? Then I disbelieve forever in truth and goodness anywhere! Doubt him? Then I doubt everybody! But as I know that you can never convince me I give you my promise that when I lose my faith in Stratford's innocence I will marry you."

The marquis's face brightened.

"I shall enter upon my task without delay," he said, briefly. "I have a printed volume containing the history of the trial. I will look it over and mark the most important points of evidence. Read it carefully and candidly, Vivian, and you will give up your present wild delusion."

"And if I am but confirmed in my belief?"

"That is impossible. I will do anything you wish, undertake any task however impossible, but I already foresee the result. Stratford has been dead many years; you have long since been freed from association with his memory, and have ceased to bear his name. I love you, Vivian. Marry me. Let me announce our engagement to our friends, and when once we are married the last shadow of the hateful past will drift from you. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.'"

"I cannot do that. I think of him continually; even were I to marry you, Rowland, his memory would always be dearer to me than any living being. I loved him, not for the brief hour of his prosperity, when he was the favorite of society, the idol of his friends, but for all time; when he lay in prison, accused of a horrible crime, abandoned by his friends, and condemned to die; when he wandered a fugitive in foreign lands, and when he lay in his nameless and dishonored grave. Then, in his need and bitter anguish, I loved him most. You know how my father restrained me of my liberty, and refused to allow me to see my husband in prison. You know that it was against my wish that the suit for divorce was brought. I never once swerved in my love for, and faith in, my husband, never! never! And the greatest sorrow I have is that he never knew that I was true to him through all, and that I always trusted him. He died believing me turned against him, and one of his bitterest enemies," and Lady Vivian's voice quivered. "I shall never be able to bury the past, for it is not dead to me, Rowland. Yet, if you will clear Stratford's name I will give you all I can, my esteem, my companionship, myself."

"And the same if I convince you of his guilt?"

Lady Vivian assented, with an incredulous curl of her lips.

The color came back to the marquis's face; the light to his mild eyes; the life and animation to his figure.

"I shall be able to announce our betrothal in a week, Vivian," he said, confidently. "I will go home and look up the records of the trial. If you feel adequate to an examination of the butler and a few others, you could easily convince yourself of the truth. May I send some of those old witnesses over to you?"

"Not yet. I may desire to examine them later."

The marquis arose. He was quite cheerful again, and spoke pleasantly of a further exchange of hospitalities, and then took his leave.

Lady Vivian watched him as he crossed the lawn and joined the amusement-seekers, with that odd expression on her superb face that had so startled and perplexed Alex the day before. She saw him presently remount his horse, and canter down the avenue and out upon the Bluff road.

Then she returned to the house and shut herself in the privacy of her own rooms.

She made her appearance at luncheon as usual. Afterward she took part in the pleasures of her guests, and was unusually gay. Later, her guests went out to ride or drive upon the Bluff road and in the home park, and Lady Vivian, excusing herself from accompanying them, retired to her own private rooms, and sent for Alex to read to her.

The girl's pure, softly-modulated, high-bred tones could not win her from her thoughts. Alex noticed her absent and troubled expression, and ascribed it the recent visit of the marquis, of which she was aware.

"I am not quite in the mood for literature, to-day, Alex," said Lady Vivian, apologizing for her inattention. "In truth, I have so many things to occupy me, that I cannot command my thoughts. You look pale, my dear. Was last evening's dissipation too much for you?"

"Oh, no, madam," answered Alex, hastily.

"I have seen at times upon your face," said Lady Vivian, kindly, "an expression that contrasts singularly with your youth. An expression that seems to denote an intense and fixed purpose, a resoluteness, and a perplexity of mind, all at once. It is a peculiar expression, my dear, and possibly I may have misinterpreted it. You seem to me to have some secret anxiety and sorrow. If you need a friend, I trust that you will not hesitate to confide in me."

"You are very kind, madam—"

"I am only selfish, my dear. I like to see happy faces around me. Is there nothing I can do for you? If there is anything, do not hesitate to call upon me. I have taken a great liking to you, and what is friendship worth if no draughts can be made upon it for sympathy or help?"

"I do not need human help," answered Alex, briefly. "No one can help me but God, to whom all hearts and all secrets are known."

"You are troubled about your father, perhaps?" said Lady Vivian, inspired by her deep interest in Alex to know more of her. "This is your first separation from him, is it not?"

"The first since I was a very little child. We have been all in all to each other ever since I can remember."

"Then I do not wonder that you are troubled at times, my dear. It is very hard to part from those we love," and Lady Vivian sighed. "Have you heard from your father since your arrival in England?"

"No, my lady. I expect a letter by every mail."

The pure young face was so wistful and sorrowful in its expression that Lady Vivian was touched. Nature, unknown to herself, was tugging at her heart-strings. The instinct of the mother awoke in her. She could not guess that this girl, with the beauty of a grand young goddess, was her own and only child whom she believed dead and buried in her ancestral vaults. No dream of such a possibility could enter her soul, and yet her heart was drawn to her daughter with a warmth and tenderness that frightened and startled herself.

"You have not told me anything of your father, my dear," she said, with a winning sweetness that made the girl's heart bound. "I should like to win your entire confidence. I should like you to be more to me than merely a hired companion. Tell me something of your father, Alex. Your mother has long been dead, I think you said. Have you no relatives in England?"

"None who know of my existence, madam."

"And you were brought up in Greece? Pardon me, my dear, but I fancy that your father may have met with losses that have forced him to live abroad," said Lady Vivian, delicately. "There are very many English gentlemen who are compelled to live on the Continent from some such reason. I do not wish to intrude upon your confidence, but if there is anything I could do to bring your father nearer to you I would gladly do it. I have influence and, through my brother, the Duke of Clyffebourne, could procure for your father a government appointment. Would he like this?"

"You are kind, my lady, very kind, but my father will never return to England," said Alex, desolately, "unless some great good-fortune comes to him, an especial good fortune which now seems as remote as the stars."

"The death of a relative, perhaps, whom your father expects to succeed?" said Lady Vivian. "You need not answer, Alex. I can wait for your confidence. Only think over my suggestion, and mention it in your next letter to your father. Do you look like him, my dear?"

"Very much, but I also resemble my mother," said Alex, calmly, although her heart was full of conflicting emotions that required all her power of self-control to repress.

Lady Vivian pursued the subject with a curiosity and interest she had not felt in any person for years.

"Your father must be a very handsome man," she said. "Has he eyes like yours, Alex?"

"They are blue, as mine are," answered the girl, cautiously. "Papa is very handsome, tall and stately and grand and noble; and he is as good and gentle as he is handsome."

"You are enthusiastic. I wonder that you left him, my dear. You were his only child, you have said."

"Our house was burned by the brigands," said Alex, "and the bandit-chief had attempted to carry me away from my home. I was not safe there, and I begged papa to let me come to England. It was hard for him to consent, but he did consent, and I came."

"Lord Kingscourt had a remarkable and exciting adventure among the brigands of Greece lately," said Lady Vivian. "He was a captive among them for three months, and was ill afterwards at a vinedresser's cottage, I think, for as many months more. What was the name of your persecutor?"

"Spiridion."

"That was the name of the earl's enemy. You ought to compare notes with Lord Kingscourt, my dear."

Alex was truthfulness itself. She had been tempted more than once to tell Lady Vivian that she had known the earl in Greece. It seemed to her dishonorable to her employer to keep from her the secret of her previous acquaintance with the earl. A revelation of the relations between herself and her lover could not possibly affect in any way her mission, or imperil her father.

Her face grew suddenly scarlet, as she said tremulously:

"Have you heard the whole story of Lord Kingscourt's adventures in Greece, Lady Vivian?"

"Certainly, my dear. I heard it from Lord Kingscourt himself, and from the Honorable Bertie Knollys," replied Lady Vivian, in surprise. "I have heard of their privations in the bandit's cave, of Spiridion's attempted outrage when he determined to cut off their ears, and of their rescue at the very crisis of affairs by a young Greek girl, as beautiful as Psyche, and as heroic as any ancient warrior. The earl must have lost his heart to that lovely Greek, for he remained three months in her house, where he was ill of rheumatism. Bertie Knollys raves about her. By the way, my dear, Mr. Knollys seems greatly to admire you," and she smiled. "He hovered about you last evening like a moth about a flame, although the earl was not less devoted."

Alex's face burned.

"Lady Vivian," she said, bravely, "the young Greek girl who rescued Lord Kingscourt and Mr. Knollys was I."

"You?"

"Yes, madam. And Lord Kingscourt was not ill at any vinedresser's cottage, but at my father's villa. Our servants nursed him."

"I did not dream of this!" exclaimed the lady, amazed.

"I should have told you before, but I had not opportunity," said Alex, "and I had not quite made up my mind what I ought to do."

"And you are the young Greek girl of whom I have heard so much?" asked Lady Vivian. "Have you told me all, my dear?"

"Not quite all," answered Alex, drooping her tell-tale face. "Lord Kingscourt liked me, and he wanted me to marry him. Papa refused his consent, and—that is all! When I came to England, I had no expectation of ever meeting the earl!"

"I am sure of that, my dear. But what a little romance! I never suspected that you had met the earl before, but now I wonder that I have been so blind. Is this marriage quite out of the question, Alex?"

"Quite, Lady Vivian, unless the good fortune I alluded to should come to papa. There is no engagement between Vane and me. He is free to marry whom he will!"

"I know him well enough to know that with him to love once is to love always. I know him to be the soul of honor, the worthy representative of a great and noble house, and I should like to play the part of fairy godmother to you both. Be frank with me, Alex. Is it lack of fortune that separates you?"

"It is more than that!" cried the girl, passionately. "You cannot help us, Lady Vivian. No one but God can help us! Even if papa should give his consent to the marriage, I would not marry Lord Kingscourt."

"And yet you love him?"

The light that leaped to the girl's sapphire eyes and transfigured the sad young face was sufficient answer.

"There is some mystery here!" thought the Lady Vivian. "What can it be?"

Her warmest sympathies were enlisted in behalf of the lovers. She resolved to hear Lord Kingscourt's story also, and to obtain from him, if possible, some clew to the mystery the existence of which she had detected.

"I am glad you have told me this, my dear," she said, gravely. "I don't like secrets, and it is right that I should know this. But it need not be told to others. Our guests need not be informed that you are the young Greek heroine they have all raved over. Perhaps everything will come out right yet. Keep up your courage, Alex, and trust in Providence!"

She bent forward and kissed the girl upon her forehead. With a wild and sudden impulse, Alex seized the Lady Vivian's hand and covered it with impetuous kisses. The girl's face was so pale, and her manner so full of excitement that her employer wondered.

"You are over-excited, my dear," she said, tenderly. "These recollections are too much for you. I will see what can be done for this little romance of yours. Trust in me, and perhaps everything will come out well."

She dismissed Alex gently, bidding her dress for dinner. When she was once more alone, Lady Vivian meditated upon the story she had just heard, and again said to herself:

"What is this mystery that makes her marriage with the earl impossible? I will hear what he has to say. I shall not be satisfied until I know Alex thoroughly; but that she is pure as an angel I know now! I will see what I can do to clear away the obstacle between this young pair!"

CHAPTER XXX.

ANOTHER PAIR OF LOVERS.

Alex appeared at dinner without any trace of recent excitement or agitation. Her composure and self-forgetfulness elicited the approval of Lady Vivian, whose own manners were always marked by that quiet repose which is considered the perfection of good-breeding. After dinner a little dance was inaugurated, and Alex played unweariedly for an hour or more. Then conversation and quiet amusements took the place of dancing, and the girl was free. She stole to a window-seat, and, half-concealed by the window-draperies, looked out upon the bright scene with sympathetic face.

The glowing fires, the mellow lights, the gay dinner-dresses, all delighted Alex. Everything contrasted with her life in Greece. But best of all she liked to look at Lady Vivian, whom she was now growing to regard, half with passionate admiration and love, and half with a feeling of bitter jealousy, because of her supposed relations with Lord Mountheron.

"How can she forget papa, even if she thinks him dead?" Alex said to herself, bitterly. "But how beautiful she is! If papa could only see her now!"

Lady Markham approached the girl with a false smile on her thin face, and with a heart full of bitter envy. The baronet's widow's dislike of Alex was becoming intense. Lady Vivian's affection for the girl, after such brief acquaintance, was plainly evident, and Lady Markham conceived herself injured by that affection, and feared, with the suspicion of a small mind, that Alex would employ her influence against the chaperone.

"It is ridiculous, Lady Vivian's fancy for that creature!" she thought. "The girl is an adventuress, and I mean to prove it! To think of a woman of the world, a duke's daughter, and one who has been called the proudest lady in England—to think of her falling in love with a girl from no one knows where, and whose antecedents are wrapped in mystery! The girl is in this house for a purpose, but I'll unmask her, little serpent!"

She pushed a chair near the window-seat and sat down. Alex's rapt look at Lady Vivian did not escape her.

"You look lonely, Miss Strange," she said. "Why do you not look over an album, or join the young people?"

"I like to look on," replied Alex, frankly. "Everything is so new to me in England that I enjoy looking on as well as participating in pleasures."

"But 'looking on' has an appearance of watching—of espionage!" said Lady Markham, dryly.

The girl's sensitive face changed color.

"I cannot think that I should be so misjudged," she said, with girlish dignity.

"Is it misjudgment?" asked Lady Markham, pitilessly. "Come, come, Miss Strange. What are we to think of a young lady who has no relatives in England and yet who is English born? What are we to think of a young lady whose father permits her to travel from Greece to England unattended, and leaves her to find a situation for herself? I like people whose antecedents are fully known—about whom is no shadow of mystery!"

"Lady Vivian is contented with my references," said Alex, proudly.

"Ah, yes. And Lady Vivian, for a woman of the world, is the most guileless and unsuspecting lady in existence, it appears. And therefore it behooves those attached to her to look sharply after her interests," said Lady Markham. "I don't believe that you are what you seem, Miss Strange."

"Madam!"

"Oh, you may look indignant, but I believe that you are here in this house for some purpose of your own," said Lady Markham. "I am a good judge of character, and I know that you are here for some private scheme. Be warned, Miss Strange. Lady Vivian has friends who watch over her, and if you mean her any harm you will get yourself into trouble."

The girl crested her proud young head haughtily. Had Lady Markham known her real name and rank, her ladyship's insolence would have been turned into servility. As it was her lip curled at Alex's show of indignation.

"I shall report your observations to Lady Vivian," said Alex, coldly.

"Do! And prove yourself the treacherous creature I took you for!" said Lady Markham, quite beside herself with anger. "You will find that I am a very old and trusted friend of Lady Vivian, that I was her mother's friend, and that a stranger cannot have sufficient influence to turn my friend against me. Tell her, and see what will happen to you."

Alex did not reply. She realized that she, a stranger in the house, could not complain to Lady Vivian of the petty insults of Lady Markham. Possibly, her word might be doubted. Possibly, she might be sent away if she were to make complaint. Besides, the matter seemed too small for complaint. She could only bear the annoyance with the best grace she could summon.

"At least," she said, "I am not compelled to listen to you, Lady Markham. Be good enough to excuse me."

She arose and crossed the floor and entered the hall. The outer door was open, and the sound of the waves beating against the cliff was heard. Alex hesitated a moment, then hurried up to her room, procured a shawl, and came down again, hastening out of doors.

A brisk wind was blowing. Alex wandered to the cliff, and sat down in the shelter of a tall rock, and listened to the lashing of the sea against the rocks.

"I have made an enemy in this house," she thought, sorrowfully. "It is well for me that Mrs. Ingestre has offered me a temporary home at Mount Heron. I am likely to be turned away from here. But what can I have done to incur Lady Markham's dislike? I have treated her with the utmost courtesy."

The shadows lay thick around the Cliff. The sky was overcast. The white foam of the sea beneath was visible through the gloom below. A storm was evidently brewing. Alex drew her shawl closer, and shrank back into the shelter of the picturesque boulder for protection from the wind.

The sound of voices and steps approaching were presently heard, startling her from her reverie. She looked around hastily. A man and woman, arm in arm, were drawing near the edge of the cliff, and were only a few feet distant from her.

Alex only nestled closer in her shelter. She believed they were guests of the house, and would pass on without seeing her.

But at the first utterance of the man Alex was spell-bound. She could not move or speak. For the man and woman were Pierre Renard and Felicie, Lady Vivian's tiring-woman, and they were speaking of Alex.

Pierre Renard had ridden over from Mount Heron to see Felicie, to whom he had long been attached. Finding the servants' hall well filled, he had asked his compatriot to walk with him upon the cliff and Felicie had consented, believing all the guests within doors. Renard had private business with his countrywoman, and that business concerned Alex.

"Who is this new companion of my lady?" he asked, with affected carelessness. "Who is this Mademoiselle Strange?"

"She is a young lady from foreign parts," replied Felicie. "When did you see her?"

"Last evening at the castle. She had the air of a young duchess," said Renard. "Is she not some relative of my lady?"

"Oh, no. She is my lady's companion, nothing more. But if you have seen her, Pierre, you have seen the most beautiful young lady in all England—"

"And one like enough to the Herons of Mount Heron to be of their race," declared Renard. "And she is like my lady too. It is a most singular coincidence. Have you not noticed the resemblance?"

"From the first, and so has my lady!"

"I should think you would be jealous of this new-comer, Felicie!"

"I! And why? My lady loves me, Pierre, but I am no companion for her. I have too little education to interest her in conversation. I cannot read or sing to her when she is wearied. I am her ladyship's maid, and necessary to her, but I cannot be her companion any more than I can be her housekeeper or butler," responded Felicie, sensibly. "There is room for Mademoiselle Strange and me too, and if Mademoiselle interests my lady, then I rejoice that she is here."

"What relatives has she?" asked Renard. "Mademoiselle, I mean!"

"A father only!"

Renard started.

"Oh, a father, eh?" he exclaimed. "She has a father?"

There was something so significant in his expression and tone that Alex trembled. Could the man suspect her identity? Had her fatal resemblance to her parents brought suspicion of her birth?

"Where does this father live, Felicie?" inquired Renard, after a brief pause.

"How inquisitive you are, Pierre," said Felicie. "I see that Mademoiselle has made a great impression upon you. Her father lives in Greece, I think. He has lived there many years, but Mademoiselle is English in everything. It is plain to see that the father is well-born."

Again was a little silence. The sea seemed to roar more loudly, and the wind was growing stronger. Under her new fears Alex crouched in a dead silence, feeling as if paralysed.

At last Renard spoke again, and as Felicie fancied, with a total change of subject.

"Poor Milady!" he sighed. "Her lot has been very bitter. Will she marry my lord, do you think, Felicie?"

"Certainly. They are sure to marry. They are even now betrothed, I think, but this is in confidence."

"The most absolute. Milady is very rich, and she has no child. She is a duke's daughter and a Duke's sister, and will be a great match even for my lord. But if her child had lived, my lord would have been only Monsieur Ingestre, nobody at all, with nothing a year, and the child would have been Marchioness of Mountheron, as the title and estates are entailed upon the female line in default of male heirs. *Ma foi!* If the child had lived! But it didn't live?"

"Of course not!"

"It was drowned in the Mediterranean, I heard. We, my lord and I, were in Nice at the time. The little Marquise's death made a grand sensation. But the body was found after many days. I forget how it was identified."

"By the pretty golden hair, and by the height and other peculiarities of person. The little clothes were nearly all gone, and the pretty face was disfigured beyond recognition. But no other child was known to be missing, and that one must have been the little Mademoiselle. My lady identified her: so did his grace the duke, so did I, so did the nurses."

"Of course. Then there could have been no doubt—hear the wind, Felicie!" and he changed the subject again. "Do you know why I came here to-night?"

"To renew old acquaintance, I suppose."

"We have kept up the old acquaintance well for eighteen years, eh, Felicie? I have been faithful, have I not? You have always refused to leave milady, but as she is to marry my lord, why should you not marry too? Think of the visits I have made you during the last eighteen years. I have come and gone without a word of encouragement, and yet I never looked upon another woman to love her. Yet if I wished I could marry a gentlewoman," he added, boastfully.

"You, Pierre! It is not fitting to boast like that!"

"It is true. But I have preferred to wait for you. I cannot wait much longer. If you do not marry me some one else shall. Now what do you say?"

"I have my savings," said prudent Felicie. "My lady has always been most generous to me. I have a handsome dower, and I don't mind saying that I have thought of this marriage. But you are different from me, Pierre, and you would bring me to want in a year. You use costly perfumes, finest kid gloves, the best broadcloth, and you wear diamonds in your bosom and on your finger. You are extravagant and wasteful. I could never marry a man who has the habits of a spendthrift with the wages of a valet. I've long had this on my mind, and now you have the whole truth."

Renard laughed strangely.

"If you had told me before your reasons for delay I could have set your mind at rest, Felicie," he exclaimed. "I have plenty of money. I have had it for years. I have the income of a gentleman, and I can afford to dress like one. I had a fortune left me by an uncle—"

"What uncle? I knew your uncles, Pierre Renard, and they were Paris cobblers and very poor!"

"It was my mother's great uncle," said Renard, hastily, and in some confusion. "He was a trader in Cayenne. You never knew him. He left me a large fortune, and I have the ambition to buy an estate in France and take my name therefrom. We can be gentlefolk, you and I, Felicie, if you will. I might marry a younger and handsomer woman," he remarked, frankly, "but I am true to the old love. Shall we marry—you and I? You shall have a chateau, and servants, and horses, and carriages, and society. I ask you for the last time, Felicie. I will not be played with forever!"

The promised grandeurs had had their effect upon even the sensible Felicie.

"If my lady marries Lord Mountheron," she said, "and I know she will—then I will marry you!"

Renard expressed his joy in warm terms.

"But as to the fortune," said the Frenchwoman, smitten with sudden doubts, "I never heard that your mother had a rich brother. Your poor mother was a pastry-cook, and so was your father—"

"But my mother's uncle was a trader. I have money in bank. Shall I bring you my bank-book to examine? Shall I prove that I am rich? I can do it, Felicie."

"You may bring me your bank-book," assented the woman. "I do not doubt your word, only, if you have long been so rich, how is it that you have stayed with my lord as a valet, instead of setting yourself up as a gentleman?"

"I am attached to my lord even as you are attached to milady," replied Renard; and again his voice sounded sinister to Alex. "But if my lord marries I shall take my leave of him, and you must come with me."

The wind blew a fiercer gust at that moment, and, drawing Felicie's arm in his, Renard led her toward the shelter of the park.

Alex did not move. They vanished in the park, and still she sat as if stunned.

"Have I found a clue at last to my uncle's murderer?" she asked herself, finally, in a whisper. "There was something false in Renard's voice when he spoke of his 'mother's uncle.' There were priceless jewels stolen from my uncle and never found. The actual murderer stole those gems. Renard bears to-day the scar of the wound received through my uncle's angry impatience in throwing him down stairs. Renard hated my uncle. Can it be he who killed him? And is Renard's fortune the fruit of the sale of those lost jewels?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AFTER MORE HAY.

It needs a bit of imagination for the full enjoyment of the anecdote. Uncle Silas didn't like to be beaten. Though his youthful days had been left very far behind him, and the frosts of more than three score years had silvered his head, yet he really fancied that he was physically as young as ever. He was a short, dumpy, happy-hearted man, fond of his joke, and particularly fond of the good things of life. One day, out in the hay-field, whither the ox-team had been driven for a load, the old man declared that he could load hay as well and as fast as he ever could; and it was known that in his younger days, placing the hay upon the load had been his forte. His two nephews did not flatly dispute him, but they clearly intimated that he overestimated his powers.

Whew! Uncle Silas leaped like a playful dog. He would just like to show them; and he issued a challenge. He said he could load the hay as fast as the pair of them could pitch it on.

The boys accepted the challenge, and the old man mounted the hay-rack, fork in hand. And then the work commenced. The boys lifted large forkfuls rapidly. While the body of the rack was being filled all went well enough, but when the load began to swell above and beyond the points of the stakes, and it became necessary to place each forkful in its proper place for binding the mass next below, things became a little mixed up on the top of the cart. Still Uncle Silas yelled out, at the top of his voice—"More hay! More hay! Drat it, boys! You don't half keep me busy!"

The boys let in. The hay went up thick and fast, and the old man's puffing, as he struggled to keep his head above the flood, could be plainly heard. At length, what with his struggling, and his choking, and his being blinded under the thick coming mass, and the clumsy, ill-fashioned manner in which the last dozen forkfuls had been suffered to rest where they had fallen, the top of the load slid off upon the ground, and the old man with it.

"Hallo! Uncle Silas, what'r ye down here for?"

"Down here for?" gasped the old man, struggling up from the choking, blinding pile. "Why, concarn yer lazy, good-for-nothing picturs, I've come down after more hay!"

S. C., JR.

THE FLIRT FOILED.

BY GATH BRITTLE.

It was summer time; the month was June;
Far away in the distant west
Lay the silver scythe of the growing moon
On a golden sunset's crest.

The air was still, as though to list
To the words of the lovers there,
As they sat and solemnly plighted their troth
With oaths such as lovers swear.

They sat by the side of the babbling brook,
Each holding the other's hand—
The bravest lad and the fairest lass
In the whole length of the land.

"And thou wouldst be mine?" she sweetly said.
"By thine eyes, while I live!" quoth he.
"Then I will be thine, come weal come woe,"
With a blush of delight said she.

They sat again in the autumn time,
By the self-same streamlet's side;
And the cold white moon looked slyly down
To learn what would next betide.

"For," said the moon, with a heartless grin,
"There are lovers and lovers, I know;
But how many lovers remember to love
When the flowers have ceased to blow?"

These are the words that the cold moon heard,
As she sat 'mid the stars on high;
And these are the words that came with a shock
To every star in the sky:

"I think," said the maid, as she hung her head,
"Please do not deem me unkind,
We were hasty, and I—I say it with pain—
But I *think* I have changed my mind."

He did not break out in a burst of rage,
He did not dissolve in tears;
He did not laugh as they laugh on the stage,
Or answer with taunts and jeers.

No. "'Tis odd," said he, "that a common thought
Should move my mind and thine;
While thou *thinkest* that thine is changed,
I *know* that I've changed mine."

The stars wept, but the cynic moon
Had never a tear to spare;
But she laughed as the flirt went sadly home
To bewail her folly there.

HARALDA THE HERO;

OR,

The Bride of Barcelona.

A Romance of Spain in the Fifteenth Century.

By PROF. WM. HENRY PECK.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ENGLISHMEN IN DANGER.

After a few minutes of further conversation concerning the two Englishmen, Count Scorda and his sister agreed that it would be best not to have them slain in the streets.

"To slay them in the street and on their way to the fortress," said the countess, "it will be necessary to give secret yet strict orders to that effect to some of my body-guards as well as to some of your own. I do not approve of your plan, my brother. Twice have we in this manner and in Barcelona rid ourselves of a dangerous enemy. To do so a third time might excite ugly reports hereafter. We shall have to bribe and rely on the faith of too many."

"Not a man of those who aided our purposes on those two occasions to which you refer," said the count, grimly, "are now alive. One by one, and distant from each other, they died, and no suspicion fell upon us."

"No suspicion that has dared to rear its crest before us," replied the countess. "Yet suspicion probably exists, and were we less powerful and secure than we are we might feel its effects. Hear my plan. A detachment of the Inez guards shall arrest the Englishmen, gag them and bind them instantly; place them in a close litter and convey them to a dungeon of the fortress; and after Volta shall have done his duty as Deathsman at his post he shall strangle the Englishmen in their dungeon as detected spies of the Torreda faction. Ere Lord Windar dies I wish to tell him with my own lips that by my command he is doomed to death. Come, we have no time to lose."

"Nay, my sister; it is not now necessary for me to do more in this matter," said the count. "Let the arrest be made in your name, and by your guards. I give the Englishmen to you, and will share with you the riches of their portmanteau!"

"A fig for their portmanteau!" exclaimed the vindictive countess. "To obtain the revenge which chance has cast into my hands I would have given a thousand portmanteaux of jewels. But where is Juan Galloz? He should be taken care of. He knows even more than the spy did."

"True. But I have use for Juan Galloz for a time. Have no fear that he will say or do aught to harm me."

"He may, to harm me," said the countess, sharply.

"Can he harm you without harming me?" replied the count. "I hold his life at the tip of my tongue, and he shall soon know that I do. Have no fear of Juan Galloz. I have sent a man after him—to search for him everywhere till he finds him—and to say to him: 'Count Scorda has your secret, Juan Galloz. Be faithful to the count, or he will speak of the *Neapolita*.'"

"Why of the *Neapolita*? That is the name of a ship, is it not?" asked the countess.

"No matter, my dear sister. Some day you shall be told. Suffice it that Juan Galloz will know what I mean, and will sooner chop off his right hand than act against my wishes. He shall not live an hour after I see danger to me in his life."

"That is well—so far as it goes," said the countess. "But it will be safer to do with him as you have done with your spy."

"He has not yet served me as far as I need him," replied the count—his mind being upon that assassination of his sister of which he had spoken to Galloz.

"Very well. But take care. I hate Juan Galloz. I go now to attend to the arrest of the Englishmen," said the countess, who then quitted the cabinet.

"Ay, and I doubt not you will attend well to that," said the count to himself. "If she fails, and evil comes of the attempt, I will say that it was her affair, and not mine. That had I known of her design, I would have prevented the attempt or the deed—if she carry it to an end, as I hope she will. I knew that she would reject my proposal to have the Englishmen slain in the streets. I knew that she would conceive a plan of her own, and insist upon it. She always does. I shall be rid of her obstinacy and self-will ere long; but now I am pleased. So Juan Galloz is that Cadmus the Catalan of whose treachery to the *Neapolita* we used to hear so much many years ago. He shall be my very slave now—at least till I may have no further use for him."

The countess, who always acted swiftly and strongly when anything like gratification of her hatred was before her and within her reach, lost no time in perfecting her plans for the arrest of Masters Maxton and Redwind—to whom we now return, as two servants bearing salvers of fruit, cake, and wine entered their presence.

"With our knowledge of Count Scorda's villainy and the warning just given to us by Juan Galloz," said Master Maxton in English to his cousin, "we would be fools to taste anything in this palace."

"Very true," replied Master Redwind, as the servants placed the salvers upon a table. "We will taste nothing, for I have heard that the Italians and Spaniards can poison even fruit just from the tree."

Four more servants now entered, bearing dishes smoking with viands. These four were closely followed by four others, bearing two great baskets which contained new and rich apparel, both of velvet, silk and snow-white linen.

There were now no less than eight servants in the room, but as they busied themselves in various parts of the apartments, and as the great were ever served by numerous servitors, their number did not excite any suspicion in the minds of the Englishmen—especially as the last four were followed by a man in the garb of a chamberlain, who advanced toward the Englishmen, bowing at each step, and saying, amid a profusion of compliments and courteous language:

"Count Scorda asks pardon for this apparent neglect, noble sirs. Here are baskets of rich attire—full suits of various sizes, for the festivities of the day—blue, green, white, scarlet—any color or colors your lordships may like—any material—every material—velvet, silk, satin, linen, woolen—everything at your lordships' command. And food fresh from the kitchens of the palace—fruits, wines—everything."

But suddenly this garrulous fellow clapped his hands together violently and the eight pretended servants rushed upon the two Englishmen.

These were eight of the most powerful and reckless men of the body-guard of Countess Inez.

This attack was so swift, so unexpected, and so veteran-like that ere either of the Englishmen could draw a weapon each was in the grasp of eight strong and active hands.

The Englishmen were men of great strength, and they struggled fiercely to reach and draw their weapons; but their assailants had been selected for the arrest by Countess Inez herself, and no weapons were drawn.

The pretended chamberlain—a sergeant of the Inez Guards, and a man of immense strength—now took part in the fray, amazed by the success with which both of the Englishmen kept their feet, and the strength with which they battled against such great odds.

Neither of the cousins wasted his breath by uttering a single shout for aid, for each felt that it would be vain to hope for aid in that palace. Once each got an arm free, and was able to deal a single blow with his fist ere that arm was again grasped and held by mighty hands; and each blow broke the jaws of one of the guards. Once again Master Redwind was able to strike, and the sergeant fell back, groaning under the pain of two broken ribs.

Up and down and around amid a confused mass of heads, heels and bodies incessantly in rapid and furious motion, here and there, and until every quarter of the room had been struggled over, did this unequal combat go on; and in a grim silence that was broken by no spoken word, and only by the quick gasping for breath by strong and contending men.

"You must capture, bind and gag them without striking them a single blow," was the command of Countess Inez; and as the struggle went on she appeared at the door, followed by eight more men.

"In, and end this, but strike no blow," she said to this fresh force.

Thus attacked the brave Englishmen were hurled to the floor, and held there till they were securely bound hand and foot and gagged.

The countess made a single gesture, and her guards instantly quitted the room, leaving her alone with the captives, but remaining within reach of her call.

She closed the door, and approaching the prostrate and helpless men, gazed down exultantly into the bold and defiant eyes of Master Redwind and said in a tone audible only to the Englishmen:

"At last, Lord Windar, you are in the power of Inez del Scorda. You escaped here in Barcelona, fifteen years ago, the daggers I bribed to slay you. You escaped in England the dagger of the man I sent thither to slay you."

"True," said the undaunted man in his heart. "My Yorkist cousin, who usurped my title, received the death this wretched woman meant for me. So—it was to the hate of Inez del Scorda that I owed the attack that drove me from Barcelona fifteen years ago. Well, I always suspected that." And with a world of scorn and defiance in his clear bright eye he steadily returned the baleful gaze of the vindictive and triumphant countess.

"I have little to say to you, my lord," she continued, "and speak with you now only that you may know as you die that the hand you scorned has struck the blow—has knotted the rope that ends your life. This is not all my revenge, proud man. You refused my love—and I did most devotedly love you. You scorned it—even after I told you of it, and of my desire to be your wife. You scorned it and me, and gave your love to Countess Mona, sister of Torreda. You would have married her—the proud so-called beauty whom I hated. As your appointed marriage day drew near she vanished—she was lost at sea—on a pleasure excursion, report said. She and the little daughter of your sister and Count Torreda. So report said. So report still says when those who have been lost so long are spoken of. Report lied. I bartered with Balbac the Saracen to capture your betrothed and your sister's little child."

"So I have long suspected, accursed and vengeful hag!" thought Master Redwind—as we shall continue to call the disguised earl.

"Balbac came not himself," continued the countess, who did not know that he who was her ally in the deed of which she was now boasting, and who called himself Ibraim Bey was Balbac himself. "But he sent one of his captains, a Moor named Ibraim Bey, and properly instructed by me, he and those with him captured the pleasure boat, slew all aboard of it—save your betrothed, your niece and her nurse—and then sunk the pleasure-boat. Your beloved Countess Mona, fair and lovely Torreda, and your child-niece and the nurse were carried to the fortress of the Saracen. Your niece is in this palace now. You have seen her. She is called Balbac's daughter, but she is the daughter of Count Alphonso del Torreda and your sister. She is soon—within an hour or so—to become the wife of my brother—First Lady of Barcelona—for a time."

"So—Lady Mazeenta is my niece!" thought Master Redwind. "Now I know why my heart felt so keenly for that poor captive maiden. Now I know why her features were so wonderfully like those of Countess Mona! She is also the niece of Countess Mona."

"Can you guess why I say that your sister's daughter, this Lady Mazeenta, shall be First Lady of Barcelona for a time? For a time?" continued the countess, with a sneer: "Because to-morrow she will die of a poison that I gave her not an hour ago!"

"Murderous hag!" thought Masters Redwind and Maxton, as with one brain.

"I hate her," said the countess. "Her hair is exactly the hair of your sister, the wife of Count Torreda. Her face is the face of Torreda's sister, whom you loved, my lord. Your darling Countess Mona—where is she? If not dead she is one of the many wives of some infidel—some horrible Moor or Turk."

"Now may Heaven have given my beloved Mona speedy death years ago, rather than life to suffer the dishonor and misery this hag gloats upon!" mentally exclaimed Master Redwind.

"And your brother-in-law, whom you loved and admired," resumed the vengeful countess, her eyes glittering with malicious delight, "and your golden-haired sister—where are they? Exiled and outlawed—and by my scheming and my power! And now is my cup of revenge to be filled even to running over by your death. You are to be strangled—you and your companion. I do not know him, nor do I care to know who he is. He dies with you, and this day, and by the hand of Volta the Deathsman. Hence you two are to be carried to a dungeon of the fortress of The Arsenals. In that dungeon, ere the sun of this day goes down, you two will die—strangled by Volta, or by his deaf and dumb sons, Jacob and Esau."

She uttered this terrible doom with a voice that trembled with joy. Her head was twisted aside as she spoke, so that her squint was a hideous thing to see.

She called in one of her guards, and bade him make strict search of the clothing of the prostrate captives, and give into her hands everything that he should find.

The guard, expert and rapid, obeyed her, and her keen eyes watched him sharply. All written matter that he found she placed in the portmanteau, which she was able to unlock with a key taken from Master Maxton's vest.

A slight examination of the interior of the portmanteau told the avaricious as well as revengeful countess that it contained many packages of jewels, and her base soul swelled with the joy of a miser as she relocked the portmanteau and placed the key in her pocket.

She then dismissed the guard from the room, and again stood near the prostrate man.

"You have a very valuable portmanteau, I find, and I doubt not that its contents can fill a place in the Scorda coffers as well as they might aid the Lancasterian party—zeal and folly in whose service have placed you as you are."

"The accursed harpy!" thought the two Englishmen, while their eyes flamed with scorn and defiance.

"Your fate will never be known by any of your friends," said the countess, "nor by any of your enemies save myself and Count Scorda. Fools you were to trust yourselves under his roof. Why, yonder closet-door—which cannot be opened save by those who know its secret—has a rear and secret door, and in that closet crouched and listened a spy of my brother from the moment you and Juan Galloz entered the room till the innkeeper departed. Adieu! We shall not meet again—at least not in this world."

"And may Heaven grant that we shall never meet in the next!" mentally exclaimed the prostrate cousins.

The countess then dragged the heavy portmanteau to the closet-door of which she had spoken, and touched some secret spring in the woodwork. She then pushed the door aside, and having thrust and shoved the portmanteau into the closet—which had a secret passage that connected it with Count Scorda's private cabinet—closed the door, and having thus concealed her booty, again summoned her guards.

They entered her presence and, by her commands, emptied the two great baskets of their contents—which in the main consisted of blankets and sheets.

Each basket was amply large enough to contain a man; and by the orders of the countess Master Redwind was placed in one and Master Maxton in the other, and blankets and sheets were thrown upon them so as to conceal their presence therein.

Thus were the helpless Englishmen carried out of the Scorda palace to the narrow street through which they had so rashly approached the disaster that had befallen them; and at the rear gate they and the baskets which contained them were lifted into a covered cart, pulled by but one mule.

He who acted as driver, and in the coarse garb of a cartman, was one of the guards of the countess, and two other of her guards—their military attire concealed under long blouses, high-legged boots and slouched hats—rode in the cart.

As the cart moved away, scarcely noticed by the few who saw it, a thundering salvo of guns from the fortress, echoed instantly by all the cannon in every part of the city that had saluted the dawn of this eventful day, gave notice to the people of Barcelona that the Deathsman and the man doomed to die in the iron chair had begun to move toward the port.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TWO PROCESSIONS MOVE.

The countess consumed so much time in achieving the arrest of the Englishmen that she was not present in the bridal apartments when a bridal vail was put upon Lady Mazeenta by her attendants. At that time Countess Inez was gazing from a rear window of the palace at the cart as it began to move away with her intended victims.

"Ah," she said to herself, as she heard the salvos of cannon, "the Deathsman is leaving the fortress with the condemned man. I must see that our intended First Lady of Barcelona is ready for the bridal procession."

But as she turned from the window she saw Count Scorda approaching her. He walked rapidly, for he had been seeking her, and his glance had just fallen upon her.

"Come," said the countess, beckoning to him, and returning to the window which she had just left.

"I have been looking for you," said the count in a whisper, as he joined her, though they were alone. "How have you disposed of the Englishmen? I am just from the apartment in which they were—"

"Ah! you approached that apartment by the closet passage?"

"In fact I was there during the arrest. You were near discovering me when you opened the closet door to put the portmanteau there."

"There was no one in the room then but myself and the two Englishmen, and they were not in a position to see you. You heard and saw the struggle?"

"I did. It was well done. I withdrew from the closet as you opened its outer door, and returned to my cabinet for a time. When I went back the portmanteau was still in the closet but the room was empty. What have you done with the Englishmen?"

"They are in yonder covered cart, which is on its way to the fortress. One of my guards bears an order to the governor of the prison to place the Englishmen in the dungeon of the condemned, and not to remove their gags till he shall receive an order to that effect from you or me."

"The governor of the prison will not dare to disobey your written order," said the count. "You have acted with great prudence. How fortunate, perhaps, that neither of the Englishmen declared their names and rank during the struggle."

"It would not have mattered if they had. Those who arrested them are as faithful to me as are my own hands," replied the countess. "They had my orders to be deaf to all appeals the Englishmen might have made. I pay my guards liberally, and they serve me faithfully. But is it not time for your bridal procession to move?"

"The procession is formed and ready, and awaits only the presence of the bride and the bridegroom, my sister. It is your duty to conduct Lady Mazeenta to the litter of the bride. Go. You will find me mounted near the bridal litter, among our noble friends. You are to ride with Lady Mazeenta in the litter on its way to the port—"

"Not I," said the countess, sharply. "I shall ride at the head of my guards, as I ever do."

"But upon this occasion it is proper that some elderly—I mean some lady older than the bride—you know what I mean. You are to give the bride away, you know."

"But I will not ride in the bridal litter," replied the countess, firmly. "A litter! I have never ridden in so effeminate a vehicle since I could control a horse, or my hand could lift a sword."

"True. You should have been born a male."

"Then would I and not you be Count del Scorda," thought the countess.

"But go with the procession as you will," continued the count. "Some lady must ride in the bridal litter with Lady Mazeenta. But I will see to this since you refuse. I await you and Lady Mazeenta below."

And with these words Count Scorda departed in no good humor, as he really desired that his sister should accompany his intended bride.

"I care not to ride so near a poisoned vail as it is worn by her upon whom I have placed it," said the countess to herself, as she took her way toward the bridal apartment. "Nor do I desire to ride side by side with one upon whose vitals a poison administered by me is slowly but surely preying. Besides, when the mob and rabble of Barcelona stare and gaze at me they shall see me in my saddle and amid my guards, not in a litter. I wish nature had made me a man and not a woman."

Perhaps nature had made her more fiend than woman.

On appearing in the bridal apartments the countess found Lady Mazeenta already fully prepared for the bridal procession, and about to go below, leaning upon the arm of a grave and elderly lady, the wife of a nobleman. Count Scorda was present also, as he had just escorted this lady to the presence of his intended bride.

The keen eyes of the countess instantly detected that Lady Mazeenta's vail was not that which she had given her.

A flash of repressed rage darted from the squinting eyes, and their owner said, in a voice almost tremulous with wrath:

"You disdain, I see, the gift from my hands Lady Mazeenta."

"No, Countess Inez.," replied Lady Mazeenta, gently, "I do not disdain your gift, nor must I appear to disdain that of my intended husband. I have decided to wear the vail given to me by Count Scorda. I mean all in kindness and friendship to you, countess."

"Since you will not wear it to-day," said the countess, carelessly, "I pray you return it to me."

"Certainly," replied Lady Mazeenta, and at her command one of the attendants presented the casket to the countess.

"It may serve my purpose at some future time," thought the murderous woman. "She has swallowed poison that will certainly put an end to her First Ladyship of Barcelona ere to-morrow's sun goes down; so it does not matter that she has refused to wear the poisoned vail."

Count Scorda, who suspected nothing of the truth concerning the vail, was delighted and flattered by the declared preference of Lady Mazeenta for his gift; and after expressing his thanks he hurried away to be at his proper place in the bridal procession.

A few minutes later saw the procession in motion in the magnificent avenue called *The Rambla*.

A costly and superbly-adorned open litter, having a canopy by which those beneath it were sheltered from the rays of the sun, contained Lady Mazeenta and her companion-lady. The litter was carried by eight tall and handsome servants of the Scorda palace, and around it, before, behind and on either side, rode many ladies—wives and daughters and sisters of nobles of the Scorda faction—all mounted on handsome and gayly accoutred horses.

Encircling the above and often mingling in their ranks were hundreds of nobles, married and unmarried, well mounted and in the gorgeous and glittering costume of that extravagant age and most extravagant people.

Only the mounted body-guards and the foot-guards of Count Scorda and the guards of his sister were fully armed; and at the head of the former rode the proud and triumphant count, leading the long and sparkling procession, while Countess Inez dark, stern and silent, rode amid her soldiers as rear guard of the bridal litter. Hundreds of the upper ranks, and among them many white-headed and white-bearded nobles were in the procession—some in litters, but the majority on excellent and beautiful horses.

Bands of musicians marched at different points in the body of the procession, and all in all it was a scene of joy and splendor, in which the gay dresses of the ladies were scarcely more beautiful and showy than those of the gentlemen.

On either side of *The Rambla*—through which once flowed a small river—marched thousands of men, women and children, the common people of Barcelona; and these moving masses swept before, behind and on either side of the bridal procession in such numbers that the procession, great as it was, seemed sometimes about to be overwhelmed by the surging multitude.

But at such times the trumpeters of the Scorda and Inez guards blew fierce and significant blasts, and the long lances of the well-trained soldiery menaced the heaving crowds so rapidly and incessantly that no serious hindrance was thrust upon the procession.

In the midst of the latter could be seen the tall canopied and superbly ornamented double litter of Balbac the Saracen, borne on the shoulders of his eight disguised captains; and amid the rabble on either side of the broad and straight *Rambla* were many of his bravest and most faithful men, in the garb of peasants.

As Lady Mazeenta was about to step into the bridal litter, her searching glance had found and rested for a moment upon the face of Balbac as it was partly visible between the crimson and gold curtains of his sumptuous litter. She could not see his eyes, concealed carefully as they were by his dark glasses, and yet he was near enough to her to enable her to see the outlines of his white-bearded face, and to know that he saw her eyes—for he made a slight but significant gesture well understood by her, and which signified that he had no doubt all was progressing well for her speedy rescue from the power of Count Scorda.

"If my father fails to rescue me," she said to herself, "my own hand shall drive through my heart the dagger he gave me in his litter."

The procession made the march through *The Rambla* in little more than half an hour, and as it approached the stone stairs that led to the waters of the port Lady Mazeenta saw that hundreds of boats of all kinds, laden with curious people, were moving to and fro, or resting quietly upon the glassy surface of the port. All the population of Barcelona appeared to have deserted everything else to be participants or lookers-on of the two solemn ceremonies that were to be performed upon the two floating platforms.

The distance from the fortress of *The Arsenals* to the boat-stairs of *The Rambla* was greater than that from the Scorda palace to the same place, and as the death-step of Volta—which governed the progress of his procession from the fortress—was very slow, he and his intended victim arrived at the boat-stairs, or near them, a few moments after the advance of the bridal procession appeared there.

It was fated that Lord Haralda should pass within a few feet of Lady Mazeenta ere he descended the boat-stairs; and it came about in the manner we now relate.

After the departure of Count Scorda from the turret-prison, Lord Haralda remained perfectly passive and prostrate upon the floor, all hope of rescue, even by sudden death, from the terrible torture of the iron chair having fled from his heart. Gagged, and disfigured beyond the recognition of even his most intimate friends—even if any intimate friend of his were by merest probability to be in Barcelona at this time—he had left to him only the hope that when his hands should be freed to make that signal of readiness to reveal the secret so desired to be possessed by Count Scorda, he might, by making a certain peculiar signal, be recognized as Haralda the Greek by some sailor who had once served under him and been a member of a secret order of Christian warriors among whom Lord Haralda was the chief.

He had no hope that the recognition of this secret signal by any one might lead to his rescue.

"If recognized," he thought, "it will certainly cause inquiry hereafter, and inquiry may disclose enough to hurl vengeance for my death upon the head of Ramas del Scorda at no distant day. 'The Brothers of Haralda,' are sworn to avenge any injury done to even the least of their number—and I am their chief."

"The Brothers of Haralda," was the title of a band of heroic men whose fidelity to him and to each other and to the cause of Christendom in the East, had had much to do with Lord Haralda's fame and greatness as a successful enemy of the Turks.

A few minutes before noon Lord Haralda was approached by Volta—who had been eating and drinking with his deaf and dumb sons—and lifted to his feet.

"Can you walk, my man?" asked Volta, "or shall we carry you to the port in a chair?"

Lord Haralda, whose feet were now free from shackles, replied by pacing to and fro before the Deathsman.

"You walk with the step of a king and the firmness of a lion," said Volta. "We shall make a brave and handsome show as we march from the fortress gate to the port-stairs of *The Rambla*. Come."

Walking before his prisoner, while his two sons walked behind the latter, Volta led the way to the great hall below. Here the Deathsman received his great ax of execution from the hands of one of the prison officials—for though the ponderous weapon was not to be used in the present execution to behead or mangle any one, Volta always carried it upon his shoulder on such occasions.

Jacob and Esau, clad in black and red, carried flaming torches, to show that the condemned man was to be burned; and several others of the prison followed them, bearing long iron rods with forked points, which were used at such burnings, to keep blazing fagots near, or far from the victim, as Volta might see fit to command.

As soon as the cannon of the fortress thundered the hour of noon, Volta and his dismal procession marched with solemn steps and slow from the great front gate of the fortress; and as this procession moved toward the port people began to gather around it, though by no means in the vast masses that accompanied the bridal procession from the Scorda palace.

Quite a strong force of the fortress guards—in fact, all not on sentinel duty there—accompanied Volta's party. And so large a force went, not because any attempt to rescue the condemned man was suspected, but because the governor of the fortress had seen fit to gratify the desire of as many as he could who wished to see the intended spectacle at the port, so that barely enough sentinels were left to guard the gate from even ordinary intrusion.

Soon after Volta had begun his march several enormous wagons or carts loosely loaded up with hay and straw began to move slowly towards the fortress, hauled by mules which were driven by several muleteers. It is hardly necessary for us to state that among these muleteers were the two into whose cart Dama Boveda made the precipitate fall of which we have spoken, and that one of these muleteers was Alphonso del Torreda, the exiled and outlawed count and father of Lady Mazeenta—now steadily pushing to completion his bold plan for the capture of Barcelona and the restoration of himself to his former power and greatness.

Volta, haughty as a king now that he was in parade as the Deathsman of Barcelona, did not perceive these carts; and if he had he would have given no attention to them. He strode on, pompous and slow, the accidental attendants of his procession increasing in number the nearer his route of march carried him to the boat-stairs of *The Rambla*.

"Death to Haybad!" was the oft-repeated cry of the rabble, as the condemned man moved on. "Death to the assassin" "Death to the apostate!" "Death by fire!" "Death in Volta's chair!" "Long live Volta Boveda!" were some of the many other cries raised faster and fiercer as the captive approached the port.

His eyes were free. Count Scorda would have increased the mental torture of his victim had he blindfolded Lord Haralda. In fact, the cruel count would have had him blinded, had his eyes put out—as was a fearful frequency of that terrible age—had he not desired that the eyes of his captive, condemned and helpless rival should behold Lady Mazeenta and Count Scorda as bride and bridegroom. No sentiment of pity in the stony heart of Count Scorda had left eyesight to Haralda the Greek.

His eyes were free, keen, defiant and searching. His warlike spirit rose with the clamor of the deceived rabble, and his stride was truly that of a monarch marching to a throne, and not that of a condemned man going to infamous execution. His bonds did not prevent him from turning his head, and his glance flashed incessantly in search of some face that might be known to him.

The first face which he recognized among those of the mob was that of Juan Galloz, whose curiosity to see everything had carried him from the Scorda palace as soon as he left it to the streets.

But the face of the innkeeper was scarcely recognized by Lord Haralda when it vanished before a backward surge of the increasing multitude.

The litter which bore Lady Mazeenta was halted near the head of the boat-stairs by command of Count Scorda, who also ordered Volta to march his prisoner by and close to the litter that the soul of his helpless victim might be doubly tortured.

Lady Mazeenta, unaware of the vicinity of the condemned man, was forcing herself to smile at some remark made by her comrade when Lord Haralda's eyes, as he was passing by, met hers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

LITTLE MISS MUFFIT.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Little Miss Muffit
Sat on a tuffit
Eating some curds and whey,
There came a big spider
And sat down beside her,
And what did Miss Muffit say?

"Wonders will never cease," said Mrs. Noakes, as she opened a letter she had found beside her plate at breakfast. "Here is Cousin Corner coming home after all these years from California, and such a letter; just listen, my dear:

DEAR COUSIN NOAKES: I suppose you have all made up your minds that I am dead; but I'm alive, as you see, and coming home. I'm tired of mere money grubbing; and those who have made fortunes know that they need something else in this world. I mean to end my days amongst my relatives, and between you and me, I shall put them to the test. I want to find out who are really my friends and who court me for other reasons; and what I ask you to do is to make them all think me a very poor man, quite out of pocket.

Bless me, I'm laughing out loud as I write! You should hear me. To make them think that I'm poor, and that it would be a charity to ask me to pay them visits, and to invite me now and then to dinner, and all that! There I go again, laughing until the room rings! And in this way I can discover my true friends. I shall come to your house first, dressed in character. I know it is an old joke, quite a thing out of the plays and novels, but I trust it will succeed.

Yours, very affectionately, OBADIAH CORNER.

P.S.—Expect me Thursday. O. C.

"If that isn't the most amusing thing," said Mrs. Noakes—"coming home so rich that he is suspicious of his relatives and afraid of being courted for his money. And a bachelor too! Dear! dear! Poor Obadiah Corner, who used to be the black sheep of the family, and who we never believed would come to any good! How everything does change about in this world! Life *is* a checker-board, to be sure! William, what a splendid thing it would be for Arabella Muffit."

"What would be a splendid thing for Arabella, a checker-board?" asked Mr. Noakes.

"Oh! Mr. Noakes," cried his wife, "don't pretend to be stupid, because you are not, my dear, and you don't do yourself justice. I mean Cousin Obadiah."

"Cousin Obadiah would be a good thing for Arabella. Oh—yes—yes—y-e-e-s," said Mr. Noakes. "Oh! I see—you mean a good match for her. But Arabella Muffit, though a most excellent person, is no longer young, and she's never been handsome, my dear."

"That's so ridiculous!" said Mrs. Noakes. "Arabella is much younger than Obadiah, and by no means so plain as he is. But that is the way with you men. The older and uglier they get, the younger and prettier they think their wives should be. Boys of twenty sometimes fall in love with women of thirty, but men of sixty never think of any age beyond sixteen when they choose wives."

"Very true indeed," said Mr. Noakes.

"And very ridiculous," said Mrs. Noakes. "At all events, I've an affection for Arabella, and I'll do all I can to further her interest; and don't forget that we must keep Obediah's secret from the rest of the relatives. I shall give Arabella a hint of the real state of the case, but not another soul shall know a word beyond what Obadiah has told me to tell them."

"Well, women must be match-makers, I suppose," said Mr. Noakes, as he swallowed his last cup of coffee and glanced at the clock, "but don't calculate too much on success in this affair, my dear."

Then he took his hat and coat and departed for those regions colloquially known as "down town," where men of business hide themselves the best part of the day, and shortly after, Mrs. Noakes, having arrayed herself for the promenade, went out also, her purpose being no less an one than a confidential interview with the Arabella of whom she had spoken to her husband.

Arabella Muffit, known amongst her friends as little Miss Muffit, was a very small, black-eyed lady of forty-five years old, who lived in a tiny house, principally furnished with specimens of all the fancy work that had been fashionable for the last twenty-five years. She had no near relatives, and could remember none but the grandfather who left her the small property on which she now lived, but she had connections who took tea with her occasionally and with whom she dined at times; for the rest, church-going, needle-work and books occupied her time.

She opened the door for Mrs. Noakes herself, and having kissed her on both cheeks escorted her to the bedroom above, where she was busy with a queens-work chair-cover.

"Now we can have a nice chat," said she. "And you'll stay to lunch, won't you, Martha?"

Martha promised to stay; and having taken off her cloak and hat dropped into a Sleepy Hollow chair and produced Obadiah Corner's letter.

"There," she said, "read *that*, Arabella."

Arabella read it, changing color as she did so.

"Dear me," she said, "how romantic he must be. He never used to be romantic. I suppose he's changed very much in these five and twenty years. He must be fifty-seven now. And to think of his having made a fortune, and wanting to prove his friends sincere. Martha, *do* you think you ought to betray him?"

"No, I do not," said Martha; "and I shall tell no one but you. I had a motive in telling you; and as he says in a postscript he'll be here Thursday, I want you to dine with us Thursday and meet him."

Poor Arabella looked in the glass sadly.

"He'll find me so *dreadfully* changed," said she; "but I'll come, Martha."

"Bless you, we all change. We can't help that," said Mrs. Noakes. "I never worry about it;" and then they fell to talking about Obadiah, and what he used to do, and what he had been doing, and found the subject so interesting that they kept it up over the cold chicken, sponge-cake and English breakfast tea that composed their lunch.

When Thursday evening arrived it found little Miss Muffit in Mrs. Noakes's parlor, sitting opposite a burly looking man, whose nose was rather red, and whose eyes were not honest, candid eyes by any means. He was dressed very shabbily, to say the least, and had whispered to Mrs. Noakes in the hall:

"Take notice of this coat; it carries out the character, doesn't it? I look like a seedy old fellow who has had ill luck, don't I?" And he nudged Mr. Noakes with one elbow, and Mrs. Noakes with the other, while they mentally agreed that he certainly did look the character most thoroughly.

On the whole, it was rather a pleasant evening, and Arabella and Obadiah got on finely. He promised to take tea at her house in a few days, and saw her home at ten o'clock.

The rest of the connections, not having read Obadiah's letter, were not delighted at his return. They saw him shabbier than ever, and they were very careful to keep him at a distance.

Mrs. Noakes often smiled to herself to think what a difference that letter would have made in their conduct had they known of it; but she wisely held her tongue and left a fair field to Arabella. In a little while, to her joy and the great surprise of Mr. Noakes, Obadiah Corner actually proposed to little Miss Muffit, and was accepted by her.

"Such a splendid thing!" said Mrs. Noakes. "Such a wonderful thing for Arabella, and it shall all come out now."

Thereupon Mrs. Noakes went calling amongst the relatives, showing Obadiah's letter everywhere, and creating great excitement.

"And what *can* he see in little Miss Muffit?" said one mother of many daughters. "And though I say it—who, perhaps, should not—there's my Marguerite—such a beauty."

"But Marguerite was very rude to Cousin Obadiah," said Mrs. Noakes.

"The idea of an old man like that marrying—with relatives he could leave everything to."

"But men don't leave everything to relatives who snub them," said Mrs. Noakes. "Besides, Obadiah is not very old—not old at all. It's just splendid for Arabella; and she was the only one who was civil to him, you know."

Then she went away, leaving the connections generally envious of Miss Muffit, and angry with her also, as one who had been wiser in her generation than they.

And Miss Muffit, so happy that she began to grow plump, was making up a pearl-colored silk dress, and had sent some pearls, that had been left to her by her grandfather, to the jeweller's to be reset; and sat one evening building some middle-age castles in Spain, with her feet on the fender of her grate, when the bell rang, and her elderly lover was shown in.

There was no light in the room but that of the fire; and as she would have lit the drop-lamp, he stopped her.

"I want to talk a little," he said, "and I like talking in a half light. Arabella, I've a question to ask, and I want you to answer me truly. I want you to promise solemnly that you'll tell me the truth."

"I will," said little Miss Muffit, faintly. "Whatever the question is, I'll tell the truth, Obadiah."

"Well, then," said Obadiah, "Did you see the letter I wrote to cousin Noakes?"

The blood rushed to Miss Muffit's face in the darkness.

"I—I—Yes, I saw it," said she.

"I know no one else did," said Obadiah. "But you—she showed it to you? Well, I intended she should. I wrote it to be seen. I never thought Cousin Noakes could keep a secret. Arabella, I'm a poor man, and a rascal. I have met with nothing but failure. You are rich in comparison. You've a home and five hundred dollars a year. My letter was only a trap. I wanted every one to see it, and hoped to settle comfortably down among my friends with the reputation of being a rich bachelor, with a fortune to leave behind him. You only saw the letter. You only were civil, and I offered myself to you meaning to impose on you until we were safely married. I cared very little for you then, Arabella. I wanted a home, that was all."

"Oh!" cried little Miss Muffit, as if something had stung her.

"But since then," said Obadiah, looking miserably into the fire, "since then I've found how good you were—how nice, how sweet. I've come to love you, Arabella, and to feel that I mustn't play a trick on you. It was natural you should like the thought of a rich husband—and then we were great friends as boy and girl. I don't blame you, and I can't cheat you. I think it will break my miserable old heart. But good-by, good-by. I've come to say good-by and beg your pardon, my dear. They'll say you had a lucky escape. So you have. I'm going."

He arose; but little Miss Muffit arose too.

"Obadiah," she said, "I never thought of the money. Obadiah, don't think that of me. And you do care for me now?"

"The only thing in the world I love," said he.

Then she held out her trembling hand.

"Stay, Obadiah," said she.

And he caught her hand and kissed it, and in the darkness she heard him sob.

So they were married after all; and Obadiah has turned out better than could have been expected, and only Mrs. Noakes knows of that bridal-eve confession, and she, you may be sure, keeps the secret.

THE STREET MUSICIANS.

BY GEORGE L. CATLIN.

One day, through a narrow and noisome street,
Where naught but squalor and poverty greet
The passer-by, I chanced to stray.
'Twas a mellow and bright October day,
A genial autumn sun shone down
On rich and poor in the crowded town,
And over the house-tops a deep blue sky
Greeted each beggars' up-turned eye,
While the very heavens seemed to smile
His hunger and weariness to beguile.
Bare-headed children, ragged and free,
Over the curbstones romped in glee;
Lazily by a policeman walked;
Shopmen stood in their doors and talked;
Now and then, with a glance downcast,
Some wreck of a sot went staggering past
With trembling form, and a visage wan;
Yet the current of life went flowing on,
And the sky was blue, and the sunlight fell
On the happy ones, and the sad as well.

But, hark! through that narrow and crowded street,
Of a sudden there poured a melody sweet,
A volume of soft harmonious sound,
Strangely contrasting with all around;
And I paused to listen, while each sweet note
Pure as a warbling from robin's throat,
Seemed to float on the idle air
To attic, and cellar and crazy stair,
And carry a whisper of peace and rest
Wherever it went, on its pathway blest.

'Twas a strolling minstrel band of four
Who, standing before a groggery door,
With puffed out cheeks, and beating feet,
Were playing there in that busy street,
Vagabonds they, no doubt; in fact
Their garb was ragged, the trumpets cracked,
And they looked like men who seldom knew
What 'twas to own a dollar or two.
Yet, spite of this, as I listened there
To the sweet soft notes of the plaintive air
That came from those minstrels, ragged and odd,
I thought " 'Tis a message sent from God
Bringing reminders, pure and sweet,
To the poor sad souls in this narrow street."

Then the little children over the way
Looked and wondered and stopped their play,
And the officer paused in his weary walk,
And the gossiping shopmen ceased to talk,
And from tenement windows all about
There was many a weary face peeped out
And smiled at the joy that had suddenly come
To cheer its poverty-stricken home.

Out of the groggery, reeling, came
Into the sunlight (oh, for shame!)
A man whose visage and mien bespoke
A dreadful bondage to Liquor's yoke—
A soul, of honor and pride bereft,
Yet, there were traces of manhood left,
And, as the music reached his ear,
He, staggering, paused—then lingered near
Abashed and doubting—then gave a start,
For the melody sweet had touched his heart;
Those strains so plaintive and soft and low
Recalled the lullaby, long ago,
That his mother in tones so lovingly mild
Had sung to him as a little child.
Then, over him like a torrent, came
The sense of his present sin and shame,
And the tears came pouring down his cheek.
"Oh, God!" he cried, "I am frail and weak!"
And he hid his face, and murmured a prayer,
Out of the depths of his dark despair.
(God grant his penitent prayer was heard)
He turned away, and without a word,
But with steady step, and a figure bowed,
Was lost in the hurrying, passing crowd.

The music ceased, and I went my way,
But I ne'er shall forget that sunny day
When I heard that music, so soft and sweet,
Wafted down through that narrow street.

THE TWELVE O'CLOCK MAN.

Every day, for many years, just before noon, a man used to come into the space before the Brooklyn City Hall, and stand looking up at the clock, with the air of one who had made an appointment to meet some one there at that hour, but no one ever came.

When the hands of the clock had passed their moment of meeting and the minute hand hurried on leaving the other behind, the watcher would give a sigh and pass on. Then having reached the gate he would suddenly fix his eyes upon some female figure and start in pursuit—seem to discover a mistake and look at the clock again. Then he would seat himself upon the steps again and cover his face with his hands, and rising suddenly ask some one near if the clock was fast. His motions were as much the same each day as are those of an actor, who repeats the same part, and even strangers were struck by their peculiarity. To the habitués of the place, he was known as the "twelve o'clock man," and to some his coming was a source of amusement; others shook their heads and whispered that the poor man had lost his mind; but whatever they thought, however much they stared, at noon the man was always there, staring at the clock. The worst storm never kept him away, and Sabbath or holiday made no difference. He never met the one he came to meet, but he was always in time to see the hands cross themselves at the mark of noon.

When that clock of the City Hall which has looked down upon the streets of Brooklyn so many years was new, there lived in that city a man young, ardent, and full of hope, who, as most young men do, sooner or later, had fallen in love with a pretty woman and asked her to be his wife. The girl had consented and they were engaged. He desired to be married at once, but she refused to set the day. She had put him off for one reason or another for two years; and, meanwhile, he had had half-a-dozen quarrels with her, for she had been a great coquette, and even now one of her old lovers dangled about her.

Sometimes the man declared there must be an end to such work, but the girl could twist him about her finger as she chose, and it always ended in a reconciliation, until, one day, he met the two walking together arm in arm in a lover-like way, and at last declared that he would bear no more. She must choose between them and choose speedily.

The girl was frightened; from that moment she at least pretended to comport herself properly. She told her betrothed lover that she had no real tenderness for any one but himself, and that she had forbidden the other man to see her again. And he was happy, and all their meetings were pleasant. They were neither rich nor fashionable people, and his work occupied him all day, but in the evening they were together, and sometimes at the hour of noon, their mutual dinner-hour, they stole a few moments for meeting. She left the store where she was employed, he left his work-shop, and they took a little walk together; and she was all he could have wished, kind, gentle, modest, apparently with no eyes save for him. And she had set the wedding-day; and he thought only of the hour that should make her his.

It was close at hand, when one evening she told him with a smile that she would meet him in the City Hall Park next day.

"I have a holiday," she said, "and I shall be there at noon. Why do you not take one too? We might go to some pleasant place and spend the afternoon," and he had agreed at once. "If I am not there at noon wait for me," she said.

And at noon the man was there watching the clock. The hands met and passed each other, and he looked eagerly toward the gates, but she did not come. She was late, but he was patient; he walked slowly about he sat upon the steps, he lounged on the benches. One o'clock came. A policeman passed and he asked him if he thought the clock kept good time; but still he was not uneasy.

"Wait for me," she had said; and he waited. All through the long afternoon he kept his post; but as the evening shadows grew long, he felt sadly troubled. To leave might be to miss her, yet he longed to go in search of her. She might be ill, some accident might have happened.

At last, as it grew dark, he resolved to watch the employés leave the store where she was engaged, for it might be that the holiday had not been given after all. He sought the spot. She was not one of the little crowd of girls who left the store, but he knew one of them, and saluting her, asked if "Eliza" had not been there that day.

The girl looked at him in surprise.

"Oh, no, Mr. ——," she said, "Eliza left yesterday; didn't you know that?" Then she added: "We thought she was going to be married."

And now this ardent lover began to fancy that pecuniary trouble had befallen his darling.

"She has lost her place," he said. "Well, she must marry me at once. She shall not seek another." And then he set forward toward her home—a plain little boarding-house in a shabby street, thinking of her very tenderly and building bright air castles. They would be so happy together; he should build such a pretty little nest for his bird. He was not rich, but she should have all she wanted.

As he stood on the door-steps, waiting for some one to admit him he felt that he had never loved her so well before.

A stupid girl answered the bell.

"Miss ——," she repeated; "oh, no, Miss —— has gone away." Then she remembered that she had been charged with a letter. "I guess it's for *you*," she said, taking it from her soiled apron pocket, "'cause the other man has gone with her, you know."

"What other man?" cried the poor fellow; but the girl had shut the door, and he staggered away, and with trembling hands tore open the envelope, and read the letter within it by the light in a shop-window. It was very brief. This was all it said:

"I suppose you waited for me in the Park. I tell you candidly that I never meant to meet you there. That I never intended to marry you. I have married ——. I should have been more open with you if I had known that he was in earnest; but he was rich and I thought he might be flirting with me. We were married to-day. I did not want a scene, so I told you to wait for me, and when you read this I shall be on an ocean vessel far at sea. I hope you'll not take it hard; I'm not worth it; but I never could have been happy with a jealous man like you, nor a jealous man with me. Good-by."

The poor fellow read it all twice through before he fell down in a heap upon the pavement. Strangers picked him up and carried him to a hospital. There he lay for weeks, and when at last they discharged him cured, no one would have known him. That was the first day that people noticed him, staring at the clock in the Park, at high noon. Since then, every day has found him there. Rain or shine, summer or winter, he has kept his tryst, until one day a week or two ago, the boys who watched and grinned at the "twelve o'clock man" saw him lie down upon a bench with his arm under his head and close his eyes. Some one drew near and looking at him compassionately said:

"Are you ill? Can I help you?"

Then he opened his eyes.

"No, I am only tired," said he. "I think she is not coming, unless—unless the clock is wrong."

Then the strange, far-away look of the dying man was fixed upon the clock, and the eyes closed no more, until kind hands drew down the lids. The "twelve o'clock man" was dead.

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING?"

"And now, my dear children—*Where are you going?*"

They looked up into his face with surprise. Tom and Kitty, in the first glory of the new life, with the words of the old clergyman, which had made them one, still ringing in their ears, and with brightness and joy all around them, looked up into the face of good old Uncle Arthur. The young people were both orphans; Arthur Stanley was own uncle to Kitty, and had been as a father to Tom for years.

"*Where are you going?*" the old man asked, when the three had been left alone.

"Why," answered Tom, "you know—we go first to Albany; then to the Upper Lakes; thence to the White Mountains; and home by the way of Boston."

"Yes," nodded Uncle Arthur—"and after that?"

"After that? Why—I intend after that to settle down to my work."

"And Kitty settles down with you?"

"Of course she does," answered the happy lady herself, holding by her husband's arm, and looking very proud and joyous.

"And you will travel on together?"

"Certainly. Of course."

"And then, my children, whither will you go?"

The young people were puzzled. What did Uncle Arthur mean?

The old man looked at them a few moments in silence—fondly and lovingly—and then said:

"Tom—Kitty—you plan to make a trip among the lakes and mountains. You are going for pleasure. Your final destination is HOME; and during all the time you are gone, and at every stage, your every movement will be governed by the one thought—the one objective point—Home. Many objects will attract your attention on the way; you will skip hither and thither, as the impulse of the moment may inspire you; you will find new scenes, and new faces, and you may make new friends; but at every turn—through every scene—from every new face—your thoughts will dwell upon your home, and when the season of meditation comes, and you sit down to reason together, you will find yourselves making sure that home is to be reached in due time, and in safety. Am I not right?"

The old man was very serious—even solemn. The young people looked first upon one another, and then upon him.

"Dear Uncle," said Kitty, taking hold of his arm, and clinging to him yearningly, "you have something to say to us. Be sure we will listen."

"I know you will, my children. Sit down, and I will tell you. There will be but few words."

They sat down, holding each other by the hand, and when the good old man had gazed upon them until he found a moisture gathering upon his vision, he wiped his eyes, and said, in a voice that was like soft, deep-toned music:

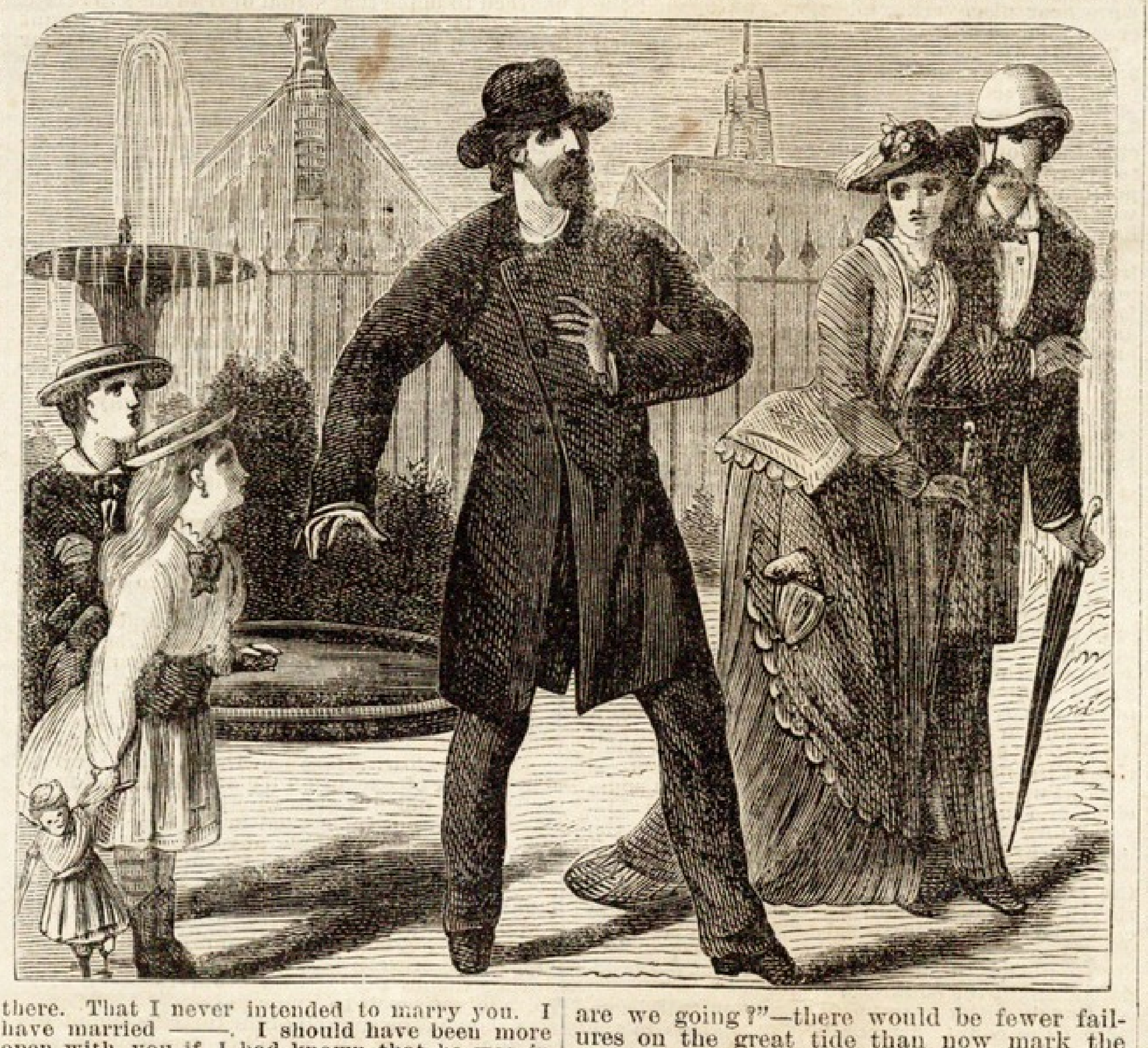
"My children, for one brief moment let us give our thoughts to the other journey upon which you have entered—the journey of the married life—the life of all lives on earth, in that generations to come shall find weal or woe, as you shall pursue your course for the future.

"And again, with thought of the journey of the new life that is opened to your feet, I ask you—WHERE ARE YOU GOING? Do you not comprehend? Ah! I see it in your faces that you do. You would like to reach the goal of age. You know the laws of health that must be obeyed to that end. But, above all else, you wish that old age should be bright, peaceful, and happy. And now, at the start, is the time to think and plan. Tom, my boy,—Kitty, my blessed one,—whither away? Ah, 'To a happy old age!' say you. And you are right. But, if you would surely reach it, must not the way be marked out now? Is not this the hour, when your minds are clear, and your young bodies are fresh and strong in health, to resolve upon your course, and thenceforth to travel on without swerving or faltering, with undying faith in God, and faith strong and abiding in your own truth and honor? Need I say more?"

No,—there was no need. He had led them to THINK, and their own good sense, uprising from hearts pure and true, and sustained by love deep and strong, was sufficient to show them the way.

Surely, if the young husband and wife, just setting forth upon the journey of the married life, would but seriously consider—"Whither are we going?"—there would be fewer failures on the great tide than now mark the course.

S. C., JR.



SCIENCE.

Mr. Douglas A. Spalding, chiefly known in the English scientific world for his researches in mental physiology, recently died near Dunkirk. He was the son of a Scotch peasant, and did common field work when a mere child. Subsequently he became a hatter's apprentice, and then he educated himself sufficiently to attend classes in the Aberdeen University. Thence he went to the neighborhood of London, where he taught school for several years and prepared himself for the Bar, to which he was eventually admitted. Poor health and a strong taste for scientific pursuits prevented him from practising as a lawyer. As tutor to the children of the late Lord and Lady Amberley he secured the requisite leisure for his favorite studies, which he prosecuted so successfully as to gain the respect and esteem of such men as Mr. Darwin, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. He devoted much attention to the habits of young animals, which he was wont to rear with much care and watchfulness, in order to gain a better knowledge of the laws of instinct and inherited association.

Professor Simon Newcomb, in his article upon the mean motion of the moon, printed in the last number of the American Journal of Science and Arts, expresses very little confidence in the celebrated eclipse of the ancient astronomer Thales. "To prevent misapprehension," he writes, "I may say that I do not deny either that Thales predicted eclipses, or that the shadow of the moon passed over Asia Minor, B. C. 585, as indicated by the Lunar Tables, or that a battle was stopped by some real or fancied advent of darkness, as described by Herodotus a century afterward; but I fail to see any good reason for maintaining that the extremely obscure account of Herodotus really refers to the total eclipse in question, or in fact to any eclipse whatever." These eclipses were all eclipses of the sun; but Professor Newcomb places some reliance upon at least thirteen of the nineteen eclipses of the moon mentioned by Ptolemy.

The vital importance of sanitary science ought by this time to be fully impressed on the minds of the Royal Family of England. It will be remembered that the severe illness of the Prince of Wales, some years ago, was caused by the defective drainage of a country house in which he had been staying; and now a recent outbreak of fever in his household turns out to be due to sewer poison from the improperly-constructed and poorly-ventilated drains and cess-pools in Marlborough House, the Prince's London residence. In addition to all this, it seems the Queen's health has been endangered by drinking impure water from the Lammas well, at Kingston-on-Thames. The medical officer of the district has just discovered that the water from this well is not fit to drink; yet it has been the habit of the Queen always to drink this water when at Claremont.

An interesting addition has been made to the collection of Barentz relics, in possession of the government of the Netherlands, by Mr. Charles Gardiner, who made a voyage to the northern extremity of Nova Zembla last year in his yacht, the *Glow Worm*. He visited the spot where the famous Dutch pilot Barentz wintered in 1596, and which remained unvisited by Europeans from the spring of that year, when Barentz left it, until reached in 1871 by Captain Carlsen, of Norway, who brought home many curious articles left there by the old explorers. To these Mr. Gardiner has now added a number of objects, among which is a written notice signed by Barentz himself and left in a powder-horn. There are also eighteen tallow candles which it is quite safe to regard as the oldest candles in the world.

Professor J. W. Mallet, of the University of Virginia, has determined that a new mineral found in Amherst county, in that State, is a niobate, or an acid oxide of the element niobium. This element was named by Heinrich Rose, the celebrated German chemist, from the Niobe of mythology, daughter of Tantalus; and Professor Mallet, following out the same idea, has named the new mineral species *Sipylite*, after Sipylus, who was one of the many children of Niobe. Sipylite is very rare, occurring in small, irregular masses of a brownish black color, with a resinous lustre, and exhibiting a remarkably brilliant glow when placed in the flame of the ordinary blow-pipe.

The portion of the Sahara southwest of Morocco, bordering the Atlantic, has usually been regarded as an exceedingly wild and barren stretch of desert almost wholly without water; but Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs finds evidence that the best existing maps of this region are imperfect in omitting to represent a number of independent streams by which it is watered. His information is derived from the narratives of recent travellers, particularly that of a Spanish officer of artillery, from whose account there is reason to believe that the western part of the Great Desert is not nearly so deficient in fertility or moisture as has commonly been supposed.

The curious notion that certain butterflies feed on emeralds prevails among the native laborers at the Muzo emerald mines, in the valley of the Magdalena river, South America; at least, so says a correspondent of the French *Courrier des Etats Unis*. The butterfly called the Morpho Cypris occurs quite plentifully in the vicinity of these mines, and the miners were greatly displeased with the writer for doubting their assertion that this highly prized insect lived by eating emeralds. Specimens of this butterfly are said to have sold as high as ten dollars in this country and in Europe.

A continental investigator, M. Hensen, who has long studied the habits of the earthworm (*Lumbricis terrestris*), in relation to the fertility of the ground, thinks that the presence of this worm in the undersoil has a tendency to make it more fertile. He does not find any evidence to support the opinion sometimes entertained by gardeners that these worms often gnaw the roots of plants.

The electric light is now used in many French manufactories, which are thus enabled to effect insurance at lower rates than can be procured by establishments lighted in any other way. The recent terrible colliery accidents in Great Britain have again called the attention of mining proprietors to the advisability of introducing electric illumination into coal-mines.

A paper has recently been presented to the French Academy by M. Govi, of Turin, in which the author endeavors to show that P. Secchi, the Roman physicist and astronomer, is wrong in maintaining that iron when heated to redness is transparent to light.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CONTRIBUTOR says: "I will be greatly obliged if you will answer the following questions in your correspondents' columns: Is Abbott's 'Life of Bonaparte' generally considered an impartial history of that great man? Was he really treated, during his captivity, in the barbarous manner therein portrayed, by the British Government and their agent, Sir Hudson Lowe? Where can I find an account of the subsequent life of all the members of the Bonaparte family? I mean the brothers and sisters of the Emperor. We are told that the Duke of Rovigo and General Lallemand, for their devotion to the Emperor, were excluded from the general amnesty, and that the British Government prohibited them from sharing his exile. Since they were no more devoted than many others, why were they treated more rigorously than others—especially by the British? Has the history of Napoleon's career, written and dictated by himself, while at St. Helena, ever been published? If so, where can the book be procured, and what is it called? Does the English nation, at the present day, condemn the action of their government at that time? Pardon me for asking so many questions. My great interest in the matter must be my excuse. Give me all the information that you have space for, and oblige." We are unable to express an opinion from personal examination of Abbott's *Life of Napoleon*. We only know that the book has been severely criticised. We cannot enter into a reply to all your questions, but refer you to any of the British Biographies of Napoleon, as Sir Walter Scott, Lockhart, or Hazlitt for the means of forming a judgment. A history (from Sir Hudson Lowe's letters) of the St. Helena Captivity has also been published in three volumes. You will find details of the Bonaparte family in any good cyclopædia, and thirty-two volumes of the *Correspondence de Napoleon* were issued from 1858 to 1869, the latter part under the direction of a Bonaparte. The British people probably felt that anything necessary to keep Napoleon from renewing trouble in Europe, justifiable by the necessities of the case; but they would hardly admit wanton cruelty.

EMMA says: "Will you be so kind as to answer this through the correspondents' columns of your *Ledger*? My education is not what I wish it were. I am very desirous of improving; would like to take a course of reading. Will you suggest the names of a few of the most important books that well-educated persons are supposed to understand and make quotations from? I would like to make myself capable of understanding and carrying on conversation in good company. I cannot seem to express myself as I wish; very often thoughts come in my mind I would like to express in good language and make a nice sentence, which is impossible for me to do. My disposition is so variable, I am not happy, for I am anxious to make friends and be thought a great deal of. It seems as if it were impossible for me to make friends and be a favorite with them. It must be owing to my disposition mainly, for I cannot appear twice alike. Some days I feel quite sociable, and think it must be all my fault in thinking people do not take notice of or interest in me. Then again other days I do not seem to care about talking; in fact it is almost impossible for me to make myself agreeable. I have no talent for anything particular that I can discover. If I knew I would cultivate it. What is your opinion of telegraphy? Do you think it a business one could improve in? Please answer these questions and oblige me greatly." You need something more than books; and if you obtained and began to fling quotations around from them, you would probably become much less agreeable than we hope you are now, notwithstanding your account of yourself. You want your mind regulated. It will do you good to learn telegraphy, and to acquire the power of supporting yourself. Read your Bible; do your duties in a right spirit to God, to every one about you, and avail yourself of all sensible books that come in your way. He or she who reads books with a view to throwing "chunks" of them at their friends is, (pardon the word) a "bore."

MALLIE, says: "I am in trouble, and come to you for advice. I have been engaged to a young gentleman for about four months; he is a perfect gentleman in every respect and is quite handsome. He seems to be perfectly devoted to me; but I know my parents would never consent for me to marry him, and I do not want to marry against their wishes, they are so good. To marry one they did not like would nearly break my heart. I am their youngest and only unmarried child. Very lately I received an offer from another young gentleman; he is handsome, intelligent, of high standing, temperate, industrious, and thought well of by all who know him. I know my parents would be perfectly willing for me to marry him. I know I could love him dearly, but still I hate to discard the other for I know he cares very much for me; I believe he would make me a good husband. I know I could be a true and loving wife to either. They both seem to love me dearly. Please give me your advice and help a troubled heart." You come to us for advice at too late a stage. You erred in becoming engaged without your parents' knowledge, and against their known will. You err also in even considering the claims of another while engaged to one. You are likely, on your present method, to mar your own happiness, and possibly in the end you will find yourself married with only half your own consent. We cannot say how it is to be done, but we think you will have to begin all over again.

DOUBTFUL says: "My case is this: Two years ago, when I was seventeen, I met a young gentleman who was five years my senior. He was my escort on all occasions. From his manner I could not but see that he loved me. I had a warm liking for him; indeed, I thought at the time that I loved him. He was poor, and left home for India in the interests of a firm by whom he was employed. He came back a short time since not rich, but with a fair prospect of being so at some day not far distant. He says now that he loves me, and asks me to be his wife. I refused, telling him that I did not love him as a wife should love her husband, but only as a friend or brother. He would not accept my answer as final, but has asked me since. Now, what am I to do? I would not give pain needlessly. I do not love any one else. Would it be wrong to accept him? Please answer as soon as you can do so, as the gentleman is soon to return to India, and begs me to go with him. Shall I go?" We think, considering your age and his unsettled position and the undecided state of your feelings, it will be wisest for you to tell him to wait a little; that you will not give yourself to any one else without informing him, and at the end of two years more, consider and settle the matter. India is a long way off, and you are young, and not in love, you say.

CINCINNATI says: "I see that you continually give advice and instructions to those that require it. Probably you can be of some assistance to me. Am twenty-five years old, and for the last two months I am almost continually despondent (depression of spirits). I try my utmost to throw off these feelings, and sometimes am successful for a little while, but invariably the blues return. Seen a physician here, who said take plenty of out-door exercise. That is all the encouragement he gave me. When I am in company I feel as well as any one. Please give me some advice which will enable me to throw off this despondent feeling." We cannot pretend to be wiser than the physician who has seen you and prescribed. We judge from your writing that you are indolent, careless, and a little slovenly (pardon the plainness) in your way of doing things. Many persons are blue for the want of an object. You can write well enough if you will. Suppose, in the intervals of out-door exercise, that you take time to practice good writing and correct spelling. It will keep you from thinking of yourself. When you have become painstaking and exact, look out for some other and adequate employment for your time and thought, and hope for a return of good spirits and mental health.

MOTH (Youngstown, N. Y.) says: "I have been a reader of your most valuable paper for the past five years, and this is the first time I have called on you for advice; but as you help so many out of difficulty, I come to you to settle a dispute between myself and a young gentleman who has been waiting on me for the past six months. He has taken me to places of amusement and to church, has shown me every attention, yet has never spoken of *love*. Now, he wants me to have my picture taken with his, to which *I* object. I hold that it is not proper for a young lady to have her picture taken with a gentleman's to whom she is not engaged; he says it would be perfectly right to have them taken together, and we have agreed to leave it to your decision as to the propriety of the matter. We shall abide by your decision." The probable and natural inference among your neighbors to whom the facts become known will be, no matter what opinion we may give, that there is an understanding between you; and unless you desire to countenance that belief, we think you should decline. Tell him the chemicals don't agree with a "moth," and wait till he opens his mouth in a practical method. When you are married you can give the artist a sitting together.

MISSISSIPPI says: "I am a young lady in my twenty-third year; have had lovers by the score ever since I was sixteen; am called a coquette; no sooner does a fellow begin to like me than some freak seizes me to dispense with his company and self at once. So I am as yet heart-whole and fancy free. Now would you advise me to marry without love, or stay unwed until my heart is given to the one I wed? I have had several proposals, yet none of them have touched my heart. Do you suppose I have any heart? I have even laughed at proposals in the face of the one who made them, yet I could love as truly as any one, I am sure. I suppose my standard is too high. Please tell me just what you think of my case. Also, to whom one must apply in order to get an appointment as treasury clerk, or whom to write to about it?" The space of this journal is a little too valuable to be given to the matter—if there is any matter—of the greater part of your letter. Nobody should marry without love. The representatives of your State in Washington can be communicated with regarding a clerkship in the Treasury.

JOHN S. T. (Philadelphia) says: "I am a constant reader of your paper, and have been for years. I take special delight in reading your answers to correspondents, but this is the first time I have ever asked your opinion on any matter, and I hope you will give it me in the above column. A friend and I have a dispute in regard to the proper use of the word *subject*. In writing a letter I used, at the end, the phrase: 'I *subject* the above to your earnest consideration.' Now my friend argues that this is an improper use of the word, and says I should have written: 'I *submit* the above,' etc. I said that either word would be correct, used in the above sense. At last we agreed to apply to you for your opinion in the matter, by which we will abide. Hoping that you will be so kind as to answer." Your letters (juging from this) must, in other respects, be so readable, and so indicative of care and taste, that we are sorry to decide, as we must do, against "subject." "Submit" is the established word.

NUMBER FORTY writes: "I am a girl of eighteen, and wish to learn bookkeeping. If you think I can learn without a teacher, (for I am not able to have one,) and by studying diligently, please inform me what to do? Will you please inform me what books to study and where to get them? for I am very anxious to learn. I have been to school quite a good deal. Don't smile and throw this aside, thinking it of no importance, for it *is* of some importance to me." You can ask at the bookstore for the Book-keeping commonly sold, and go to work. You have no reason to be discouraged.

E. L. (New York) says: "I am a young man, and in perplexity, and would earnestly ask for a little of your kind advice, which I see weekly given so kindly to the young. I am in love with a young girl, and have reason to think I might win her. But I am restrained from asking her to be my wife for this reason: I am a young lawyer in this city, and with a very small practice, scarcely worth seven hundred and fifty dollars per annum. Everything progressing in slow course, as I fear it will, some ten years may elapse before I can afford to marry, and I feel that it would be wrong for me to ask a young girl to wait so long. And yet I love her deeply, and dread seeing some one carry her off before my eyes, and all because she does not know my feelings. What shall I do—risk all to honor, and perhaps lose her?" There is some risk in all human affairs. There is also a margin of hope to all young men in your position. If in other matters there be no disparity or unfitness, we think you will be justified in laying the "case" before the lady and asking her for a dispassionate opinion after she has talked the matter over with her mother. Many good men have made love with no better prospects than yours. We do not mean of course that you should ignore her father, or do anything which you know to be improper in the circumstances, for a gentleman. We mean that your circumstances do not preclude the engagement of two sensible and mutually-adapted persons. The average professional income over the country, as a whole, is not much above a thousand dollars.

SIBYL AND NELLIE (Illinois) say: "As we have seen so much good advice given through your valuable paper, and being in need of such, and having no near friends to whom we can go, we come to you, feeling sure you will not disregard our plea. We are two orphan girls, of seventeen and eighteen years, respectively, alone in the world, and dependent on our own exertions for daily bread. For the last two years we have been keeping company with two young men of highly respectable families, and to whom we have become engaged, and whom we love truly. Now, their families object very much to their marrying girls who, though otherwise unobjectionable, are somewhat below their stations in life. This is a great cross to us, but the young men say they will not give us up, no matter what friends may say. Now, would you advise us to become their wives, in spite of all, and have good homes and the shelter of a husband's loving arms, or to give them up and continue to toil for a living? If you will give us your advice you will confer a great kindness." We advise you to be exceptionally prudent good girls; to hold on as you are for two or three years. Then you will be wiser, and better able for the cares of life; and if the young men are still of the same mind, marry them and hope for the best.

R. I. writes: "My case is this: One year ago next month I made the acquaintance of a young lady of our town. I went to see her but a short time when her father told her that he did not want me to go with her, as he did not like me, and for reasons unknown to me. I always treated him with respect. Now we see one another unknown to him. I love her to distraction, and I know she returns my love, and I expect to make her my wife some day. She is only seventeen years old, and I am twenty-two. Now, the trouble is this: Every time her father catches her with me he goes and gives his wife a scolding—never once says a word to the girl. The last time he saw us was at his door one evening. I left the door and went by him; he stopped me, and we quarreled about the affair—came near fighting. Now, what would you do? As I am an officer I don't want to have any trouble with him." Then don't have any trouble with him. Respect his feelings, and keep from annoying him as much as possible. Perhaps you presume a little too much on your official character, and he may not be one of those who think that—

"That in the captain's but a choleric word,
Which in the soldier's flat blasphemy."

N. O. L. says: "I am a young man of German descent, twenty-four years of age, engaged in a good respectable business and prospering therein, and wish to ask you to advise me through the columns of your valuable paper. I have no bad habits, go in the best of society, and I think I am considered a first-class young man by all except the young ladies, who do not seem to appreciate my attentions, which I try to make as agreeable as possible. I desire to be appreciated by the young ladies, and I take the advantage of every possible opportunity to be in their presence. I have always lived in the west, having seldom ever been out of the county in which I now live. My education is only that found in a common academy and I cannot expect to be able to make myself attractive without the advice which I ask you to give in telling me in what way I can make myself more agreeable." Mind your business. Let the ladies alone. They have no admiration for men who admire them in the abstract. Make money. Cultivate good sense, in which case you will think less, but more justly, of yourself, and in due time you will find some one who will suit you. Love her, and tell her so; and we predict the happiest results.

D. A. S. (Berlin) says: "Do you think it proper for a young lady of twenty to have more than one gentleman correspondent, or to receive attention from more than one at the same time? Her plea is, that if she corresponds and keeps company with different ones she will know which to choose from, if opportunity offers. Will you please answer?" The only opinion we could give, without an inspection of the correspondence, must be general and indefinite. If the young lady is corresponding with several with a distinct understanding that it is with a view to marriage, then her course is objectionable. She is raising expectations that must be disappointed. But if she is on trial herself with several correspondents, and they, in turn, are on trial by her also, so that in due time each may find the best of the set of candidates, then, to such as like to do things in that way the plan is unobjectionable. It is the usual one of commerce. A man gets samples, tries them, and makes his selection as they turn out.

P. A. L. (Mt. Vernon) says: "I am eighty years of age, and have taken your valuable paper for a great many years. I should like to ask one question. When I was nine years of age I learned some poetry composed on the death of a woman who killed herself and four little children. In speaking of the grief of the father, it says:

'Well might he say, like him on Britain's shore,
Fate drop the curtain, I can lose no more.'

Who did the author mean by him on Britain's shore? And what did he lose?" We regret extremely our inability to oblige a correspondent so venerable, and we hope at some future time to be more fortunate regarding anything that may interest you. We really do fear that the poet wanted a word to rhyme with "more," and so took the safe generality of "him on Britain's shore." We know nothing that exactly, and to the exclusion of every other theory, suits the allusion.

H. C. R. (Rocky Springs, Miss.) writes: "I come to you for an explanation of something that bothers me a great deal. My father edited a paper for about twenty years. He sold it to a gentleman for $2,000, he promising to pay it on a certain day in 1862. In the meantime the war came on, and my father enlisted and was killed. My mother has the paper wherein his successor promised to pay the debt. He is dead, and I want to know whether I could get the money from his heirs, or from the newspaper office?" The chances are that you could not get it from either. In nearly every State there is a law called the statute of limitations, which cancels a debt which is not collected within a certain time,—usually six years from the time it becomes due—unless there are peculiar circumstances in the case to keep the indebtedness alive. You should consult a lawyer, who is familiar with the statutes of Mississippi.

MARTI says: "I have long been a reader of the *Ledger*, and often thought I would like to ask you a question. I have been engaged to a gentleman for nearly a year. He is of a very jealous disposition. He does not like to have *any* gentleman show me attention. Now, will you please tell me if there is any harm in receiving a *little* attention from a gentleman?" That a gentleman should give you his seat in a street-car, or pick up your umbrella, or, being an acquaintance, raise his hat when you bow to him—these are reasonable indulgences to the other sex from an engaged lady, and no properly educated gentleman would object to them. Whether your lover has had cause to complain of anything more than these from you, you do not say, and we can have no opinion; but you will not, of course, as a lady inflict needless pain on him for any gratification of your own.

N. A. writes: "I am an orphan. My parents died when I was quite young. My trouble is this: Since my earliest years I have had a passion for the stage. In my younger days I acted a great deal, but lately not so much. I am now seventeen years old, and live with my aunt and uncle, who are very strict, and when I become eighteen I shall have to earn my own living. I had a good chance of earning my living by acting in a good company; but they want me to come now or not at all, and I want to get a start before I am of age. But my aunt and uncle won't hear to it at all. Please answer this soon and tell me what to do." Listen to the advice of your uncle and aunt, and seek some way of earning your living which will be approved by them. As a rule, the life of an actress is one of intolerable drudgery, and usually ends in an early death or an old age of neglect and want.

A YOUNG WIFE (California) writes: "I was married a few months ago. My husband's mother came to live with us, and in two weeks began to tell lies about me behind my back. She says she will live with us, but I have made up my mind that she shall not do so. My husband is very good to me, except that he says his mother shall not be sent away, and even says that if I will not let her live with us he will leave *me*. Now, what shall I do? My future happiness depends on the decision." You should conscientiously perform all your duties, and bear your trials bravely. When your husband sees how devoted and faithful you are, he will respect and trust you more than ever, and will be apt to take your part against all the world, as a husband (or a wife) always should do.

THREE SCHOOL-MATES (Nashville, Tenn.) write: "We want your opinion on a sentence. Is it correct to say, 'I taught you to spell,' or should it be, 'I learnt you to spell?' Our teacher says the former. please answer this in your next, for we are very anxious to know." Your teacher is right. Every one has to *learn* for himself, and no one can learn him anything. But one person can teach another, if the other has the capacity to learn.

A SUBSCRIBER.—Panoramas are not kept on hand for sale, unless they are second-hand ones, and an old panorama would not be good for much. Your idea of making money by exhibiting a panorama through the country would probably prove to be a delusive one, if you should try to carry it out. It takes a great deal of tact and much technical knowledge of the business to make money by such means.

E. B. (Brooklyn) writes: "Is there anything that will keep insects off of plants? How must they (the plants) be treated to have them bloom while in the house?" You should call at some florist's and ask him how to manage your plants. He can learn what plants you have, and then tell you how to treat them. It will not do to treat all plants alike.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*